

COLREGs Distress Signals Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



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SAMPLE

Questions

- 1. What should be done to direct attention to imminent danger with lights?**
 - A. Flash in all directions**
 - B. Direct the beam of your searchlight in the direction of the danger**
 - C. Keep lights steady**
 - D. Dim the lights**
- 2. Should vessels display day shapes when restricted in their ability to maneuver?**
 - A. True**
 - B. False**
 - C. Only during the day**
 - D. Only in inland waters**
- 3. Is the searchlight regulation in maritime distress signals considered true or false?**
 - A. True**
 - B. False**
 - C. Depends on the scenario**
 - D. Not applicable**
- 4. Does the Collision with Icebergs Regulation apply to all marine operations?**
 - A. True**
 - B. False**
 - C. Only for large vessels**
 - D. Only in polar regions**
- 5. What is the meaning of two short flashes as a light signal?**
 - A. I am at anchor**
 - B. I am restricted in my ability to maneuver**
 - C. I am operating astern propulsion**
 - D. I am overtaking**

- 6. What does a vessel do to signal that it is altering its course?**
- A. Flash lights**
 - B. Make a single long blast of sound**
 - C. Make a short blast signal**
 - D. Change color of navigation lights**
- 7. How often should a sound signal be sounded for a vessel constrained by draft during restricted visibility?**
- A. Every minute**
 - B. At intervals of not more than two minutes**
 - C. Every thirty seconds**
 - D. Only at night**
- 8. What is considered a mandatory distress signal when at anchor?**
- A. Flares**
 - B. Sound signals**
 - C. Neither**
 - D. Radio signals**
- 9. What is the duration of a prolonged blast as defined in the regulations?**
- A. One to two seconds**
 - B. Two to three seconds**
 - C. Four to six seconds**
 - D. Seven to ten seconds**
- 10. Which signal indicates that a vessel intends to proceed in reverse?**
- A. One long blast**
 - B. Two short blasts**
 - C. Three short blasts**
 - D. One short blast**

Answers

SAMPLE

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

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Explanations

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1. What should be done to direct attention to imminent danger with lights?

A. Flash in all directions

B. Direct the beam of your searchlight in the direction of the danger

C. Keep lights steady

D. Dim the lights

To direct attention to imminent danger with lights, the most effective method is to direct the beam of your searchlight in the direction of the danger. This approach acts as a clear and focused signal to others in the vicinity, making it immediately apparent where the threat is located. By aiming the beam directly at the hazard, you create a visual cue that is easily recognizable, helping to alert other vessels or individuals of the potential risk. This targeted use of lighting is especially important in maritime environments where visibility may be compromised, and distinguishing the source of danger can prevent accidents. Using a concentrated beam fosters a more effective communication of distress compared to other methods. The alternatives, while they may seem reasonable, do not accomplish the primary goal of indicating a specific imminent danger as effectively. Flashing lights in all directions could cause confusion rather than directing focused attention. Keeping lights steady does not grab attention as dramatically as moving the light towards the danger. Dimming the lights would not convey urgency and could hinder visibility instead of enhancing it.

2. Should vessels display day shapes when restricted in their ability to maneuver?

A. True

B. False

C. Only during the day

D. Only in inland waters

Vessels that are restricted in their ability to maneuver are required to display specific signals to indicate their status. However, they are not obligated to display day shapes during all times. Instead, the regulations specify that day shapes must be displayed only when conditions allow for visual signals, primarily during daylight. Hence, the statement that vessels should display day shapes regardless of time or conditions is incorrect, making the answer 'false' valid in this context. Day shapes serve an important function in maritime communication, allowing other vessels to understand the operational limitations of a vessel at a distance. However, these signals are relevant primarily during the day, and their display is not a 24-hour requirement. In conditions of low visibility or at night, vessels rely on other types of signals, such as lights. In summary, it's important to understand that the requirement to display day shapes is specifically tied to visibility conditions and is not mandatory in the dark, which confirms the correctness of the 'false' answer provided.

3. Is the searchlight regulation in maritime distress signals considered true or false?

A. True

B. False

C. Depends on the scenario

D. Not applicable

In the context of maritime distress signals, searchlight regulation is not classified as a standard distress signal under the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs). The primary distress signals recognized internationally include visual signals such as flares, flags, and sound signals. The use of a searchlight, while potentially useful for attracting attention in a distressed situation, does not meet the established criteria for formal distress signaling as defined by maritime regulations. Therefore, the assertion that the searchlight regulation is considered within the realm of distress signals is false. This aligns with the understanding that only those signals specifically mentioned in the COLREGs or the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) protocols are formal distress signals. Searchlights may aid in communication or visual identification during a distress scenario, but they are not formally recognized as a method for signaling distress on their own.

4. Does the Collision with Icebergs Regulation apply to all marine operations?

A. True

B. False

C. Only for large vessels

D. Only in polar regions

The statement that the Collision with Icebergs Regulation does not apply to all marine operations is accurate because these regulations are specifically designed to address the unique hazards presented by ice in certain regions, particularly in polar areas. The regulations are tailored to enhance safety for vessels operating in these environments where the risk of icebergs is significant. In general, while all vessels must navigate safely to avoid collisions, the specific regulations concerning icebergs do not extend to every marine operation globally. For example, vessels operating in warm waters are unlikely to encounter icebergs, so the applicability of these specific regulations would not be relevant to them. The other choices, while they suggest scenarios where the regulation may apply to some degree, do not capture the essence that these regulations are primarily relevant to vessels navigating in areas where ice presents a known hazard, reflecting a context-dependent application rather than a blanket rule for all marine operations.

5. What is the meaning of two short flashes as a light signal?

- A. I am at anchor**
- B. I am restricted in my ability to maneuver**
- C. I am operating astern propulsion**
- D. I am overtaking**

Two short flashes as a light signal specifically indicate that a vessel is operating astern propulsion. This signal serves as a clear communication tool in maritime settings, alerting nearby vessels of the maneuvers being performed, particularly when a vessel is moving backward. Effective communication via light signals is crucial for maintaining safety and preventing collisions on the water. Understanding the meaning of light signals is essential for all seafarers. The use of specific signals allows vessels to convey their actions to others in an easily recognizable manner, enhancing situational awareness. When other vessels observe two short flashes, they can identify that the signaling vessel is engaged in astern propulsion and can take appropriate actions to ensure safety and avoid close encounters.

6. What does a vessel do to signal that it is altering its course?

- A. Flash lights**
- B. Make a single long blast of sound**
- C. Make a short blast signal**
- D. Change color of navigation lights**

A vessel signals that it is altering its course by making a short blast of sound. This auditory signal serves a crucial purpose in maritime communication, particularly in situations where visual cues may not be sufficient or clear. A short blast, typically lasting about one second, is recognized universally in maritime practice. It conveys the vessel's intention to change direction, ensuring that nearby vessels are aware of the maneuver, which enhances safety on the water by reducing the risk of collisions. Other signaling methods, such as flashing lights or changing the color of navigation lights, are not standard indicators for course changes and serve different functions in maritime navigation and safety protocols. For instance, flashing lights may indicate various situations or alerts, but they do not communicate a course alteration specifically. Similarly, changing navigation light colors is typically reserved for indicating specific statuses of the vessel, such as whether it is underway, at anchor, or engaged in fishing.

7. How often should a sound signal be sounded for a vessel constrained by draft during restricted visibility?

- A. Every minute**
- B. At intervals of not more than two minutes**
- C. Every thirty seconds**
- D. Only at night**

A vessel constrained by draft is required to signal its presence in restricted visibility to ensure that other vessels are aware of its potential difficulties in navigation. According to the COLREGs, the correct protocol for sound signals in these conditions is to sound the appropriate signal at intervals of not more than two minutes. This regular signaling helps maintain safety by keeping other vessels informed about the location and movement of the constrained vessel, allowing them to take necessary precautions to avoid collisions. The two-minute interval is balanced; it's frequent enough to communicate the vessel's position without being overly disruptive. This protocol is part of a broader set of navigational rules that emphasize safety and the prevention of accidents in visually limited situations. This method of signaling plays a crucial role in maritime communication, particularly when visibility is compromised.

8. What is considered a mandatory distress signal when at anchor?

- A. Flares**
- B. Sound signals**
- C. Neither**
- D. Radio signals**

In the context of vessels at anchor, a mandatory distress signal is not explicitly outlined for that scenario under the COLREGs (International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea) or other relevant maritime statutes. When vessels are at anchor, they are not typically considered to be in immediate distress, as the act of anchoring itself is a stable state of operation. While flares, sound signals, and radio signals are used in various circumstances to communicate distress, none of these are categorized as mandatory signals for a vessel that is simply at anchor. Flares can signal distress situations but need to be used when there is an actual emergency. Sound signals, such as horns or bells, could indicate an emergency situation but are not specifically mandated for vessels at anchor. Radio signals can be used to communicate distress, but again, this is dependent on the circumstances surrounding the situation rather than a mandatory requirement. In summary, when a vessel is at anchor, there is no defined mandatory distress signal that must be employed under those conditions, leading to the conclusion that "neither" is considered a mandatory distress signal when at anchor.

9. What is the duration of a prolonged blast as defined in the regulations?

- A. One to two seconds**
- B. Two to three seconds**
- C. Four to six seconds**
- D. Seven to ten seconds**

The duration of a prolonged blast is defined in the regulations as lasting from four to six seconds. This specification is part of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs), which outline the correct use of sound signals to communicate intentions and ensure safety at sea. A prolonged blast serves as a distress signal or indicates that a vessel is navigating in limited visibility, such as fog or heavy rain. The four to six seconds duration allows a clear and recognizable sound that can be distinguishable by other vessels, reducing the risk of misunderstanding and aiding in the reliable communication of one's presence on the water. This standardization is essential for maintaining safety and preventing collisions, especially in conditions where visibility is compromised. In contrast, the other options do not meet the regulatory requirements for a prolonged blast. They either fall short of the minimum duration or extend beyond the defined parameters, which could lead to confusion or misinterpretation, thus undermining the critical role of sound signals in maritime navigation safety.

10. Which signal indicates that a vessel intends to proceed in reverse?

- A. One long blast**
- B. Two short blasts**
- C. Three short blasts**
- D. One short blast**

The signal for a vessel intending to proceed in reverse is represented by three short blasts. This specific sound signal is part of the navigational rules outlined in the COLREGs (International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea). Distinct sound signals are used by vessels to communicate their intentions to others and enhance safety while navigating. When a vessel sounds three short blasts, it clearly indicates to nearby vessels that it is making way backwards. This is critical information for other mariners, as reverse movement can present certain hazards, especially in congested waterways. Knowing that a vessel is reversing allows others to take appropriate action to avoid collision or maneuver safely around the vessel. Understanding these signals is vital for safe navigation, as different sequences of blasts have specific meanings, helping to prevent misunderstandings that could lead to accidents at sea.