

COLREGS INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS FOR PREVENTING COLLISIONS AT SEA (IRPCS) PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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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 Rule 9, how should vessels behave in a narrow channel?**
 - A. Keep to the port side of the channel
 - B. Move freely without restrictions
 - C. Keep to the starboard side and avoid impeding vessels that can navigate safely
 - D. Follow the vessel with the largest size
- 2. What kinds of vessels are included under the definition of "vessel restricted in her ability to maneuver"?**
 - A. Only commercial fishing vessels.
 - B. Vessels engaged in dredging, underwater operations, and servicing buoys.
 - C. All recreational boats.
 - D. Only motorized vessels with a crew on board.
- 3. Which rule applies in situations of overtaking?**
 - A. Rule 11
 - B. Rule 12
 - C. Rule 13
 - D. Rule 14
- 4. What does Rule 34 emphasize about proceeding through a "TSS" (Traffic Separation Scheme)?**
 - A. Vessels must maintain speed to keep traffic moving
 - B. Vessels must avoid impeding the safe passage of vessels that can only navigate safely there
 - C. Vessels must communicate their positions regularly
 - D. Vessels are allowed to change lanes frequently
- 5. What should a vessel engaged in fishing do while navigating in a narrow channel?**
 - A. Avoid impeding the passage of other vessels
 - B. Speed up to clear the channel
 - C. Signal other vessels to pass
 - D. Anchor if necessary

- 6. When does a sailing vessel have the right of way over a power-driven vessel?**
- A. When both are on a collision course, and the sailing vessel is on the windward side
 - B. When the sailing vessel is larger
 - C. When the power-driven vessel is in a narrow channel
 - D. When the sailing vessel is under engine power
- 7. What does Rule 21 cover regarding lights and shapes?**
- A. It describes how to exhibit proper lights for various types of vessels
 - B. It lists the types of vessels required to travel at night
 - C. It defines how vessels should signal under sail
 - D. It specifies what colors lights should be for safety
- 8. What is the primary purpose of the COLREGs?**
- A. To prevent collisions between vessels at sea
 - B. To regulate maritime commerce
 - C. To ensure environmental protection at sea
 - D. To maintain speed limits for vessels
- 9. What is required of every vessel regarding look-out?**
- A. Only visual observations must be made
 - B. A proper look-out must be maintained by sight, hearing, and other means
 - C. Look-out is only necessary in foggy conditions
 - D. Only the captain needs to maintain a look-out
- 10. What defines a head-on situation between two vessels?**
- A. When one vessel has the other on its starboard side
 - B. When vessels see each other nearly ahead and can observe masthead lights in line
 - C. When vessels are on a collision course but not approaching head-on
 - D. When one vessel is overtaking the other

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. According to Rule 9, how should vessels behave in a narrow channel?

- A. Keep to the port side of the channel
- B. Move freely without restrictions
- C. Keep to the starboard side and avoid impeding vessels that can navigate safely**
- D. Follow the vessel with the largest size

In a narrow channel, the regulations specify that vessels should keep to the starboard side, which is the right side when facing forward. This practice helps to ensure that vessels can navigate safely and efficiently within the restrictive confines of the channel. By keeping to the starboard side, vessels create a consistent flow of traffic and reduce the risk of collisions, particularly with oncoming vessels or those navigating in the opposite direction. Additionally, vessels must avoid impeding the safe passage of larger vessels that can navigate safely in the channel. Larger vessels often have a deeper draft and require more space and maneuverability, making it essential for smaller vessels to yield to them when safe passage is to be maintained. This aspect of the rule emphasizes the importance of situational awareness and cooperation among vessels to enhance safety in potentially hazardous navigation areas such as narrow channels. The other choices do not accurately reflect the necessary conduct required by the regulations. Maintaining discipline and adherence to the specified conduct contributes significantly to maritime safety and effective navigation in constrained waterways.

2. What kinds of vessels are included under the definition of "vessel restricted in her ability to maneuver"?

- A. Only commercial fishing vessels.
- B. Vessels engaged in dredging, underwater operations, and servicing buoys.**
- C. All recreational boats.
- D. Only motorized vessels with a crew on board.

The definition of a "vessel restricted in her ability to maneuver" includes specific types of vessels that, due to their work, cannot easily keep out of the way of other vessels. This encompasses vessels engaged in activities such as dredging, underwater operations, laying or picking up navigational buoys, and certain other types of marine work that require them to be stationary or to move with restrictions. Vessels like those involved in dredging often have equipment extending over the side that restricts their ability to change course or speed. Similarly, vessels performing underwater operations might have divers in the water or equipment deployed that compels them to maintain a specific course. This operational aspect makes it essential for such vessels to be given the right of way in navigation to prevent accidents. Other options do not fully capture the range of vessels that fit this definition. Only focusing on commercial fishing vessels does not represent the breadth of vessels that are considered restricted in their ability to maneuver. Recreational boats can vary widely in design and purpose, and many do not engage in operations that limit their maneuverability. Finally, the restriction applies to a wider category of vessels beyond just motorized vessels with crew; it includes non-motorized vessels when they are engaged in similar operations that limit

3. Which rule applies in situations of overtaking?

- A. Rule 11
- B. Rule 12
- C. Rule 13**
- D. Rule 14

The correct rule that addresses situations of overtaking is Rule 13, which specifically outlines the responsibilities of vessels when one is overtaking another. This rule defines an overtaking situation as occurring when a vessel approaches another vessel from a direction more than 22.5 degrees to the stern of the other vessel. In this context, the overtaking vessel must give way to the vessel being overtaken. This requirement is crucial to prevent collisions, as the overtaking vessel is the one in a position to maneuver safely. The rule emphasizes that the overtaken vessel can maintain its course and speed without having to alter its navigation. Rule 11 pertains to the conduct of vessels in sight of one another, Rule 12 deals with sailing vessels, and Rule 14 outlines actions for vessels that are approaching head-on. While these rules are also important within the COLREGs framework, they do not specifically focus on the dynamics of overtaking scenarios like Rule 13 does.

4. What does Rule 34 emphasize about proceeding through a "TSS" (Traffic Separation Scheme)?

- A. Vessels must maintain speed to keep traffic moving
- B. Vessels must avoid impeding the safe passage of vessels that can only navigate safely there**
- C. Vessels must communicate their positions regularly
- D. Vessels are allowed to change lanes frequently

Rule 34 of the COLREGs deals with the conduct of vessels in Traffic Separation Schemes (TSS). The rule emphasizes that vessels should avoid impeding the safe passage of vessels that can only navigate safely within the TSS. This is particularly crucial in maintaining safety and efficiency of maritime traffic, as certain vessels, like large tankers or vessels that require deep drafts, may have limited maneuverability and reliance on the TSS for navigating safely. When vessels adhere to this rule, they help ensure that those with specific navigation needs can operate without disruption. This is vital in busy shipping lanes where traffic can be dense and where even minor delays or obstructions could lead to dangerous situations. While maintaining speed, frequent communication, and lane changes are aspects of navigation and operational practices, they are not the primary focus of Rule 34. The essence of the rule lies in safeguarding the passage of vessels that depend on the dedicated routes established by the TSS, thereby upholding safe and orderly maritime traffic.

5. What should a vessel engaged in fishing do while navigating in a narrow channel?

- A. Avoid impeding the passage of other vessels**
- B. Speed up to clear the channel
- C. Signal other vessels to pass
- D. Anchor if necessary

A vessel engaged in fishing that is navigating in a narrow channel has a responsibility to avoid impeding the passage of other vessels. This duty aligns with the regulations outlined in COLREGs, particularly Rule 9, which addresses narrow channels and indicates that vessels constrained by their draft (such as fishing vessels) must not impede the passage of vessels that can safely navigate the channel. By doing so, the fishing vessel ensures safe and efficient navigation for all users of the waterway, thus reducing the risk of collisions. The other options do not appropriately address the responsibilities of a fishing vessel in such scenarios. Although signaling other vessels to pass or anchoring might be considered in some circumstances, the priority is to maintain a safe flow of traffic and avoid obstructing vessels that are better equipped to navigate the channel. Speeding up is also inappropriate, as it could create dangerous situations, especially in confined waters where maneuverability is limited. Therefore, the safest and most compliant action is for the fishing vessel to avoid impeding the passage of other vessels.

6. When does a sailing vessel have the right of way over a power-driven vessel?

- A. When both are on a collision course, and the sailing vessel is on the windward side**
- B. When the sailing vessel is larger
- C. When the power-driven vessel is in a narrow channel
- D. When the sailing vessel is under engine power

A sailing vessel has the right of way over a power-driven vessel when both are on a collision course, and the sailing vessel is on the windward side. This situation is governed by the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs), specifically Rule 12, which deals with sailing vessels. In sailing, the windward side refers to the direction from which the wind is coming. A sailing vessel that is sailing into the wind (on the windward side) is considered to be constrained by her sails and has priority over a power-driven vessel when trying to avoid a collision. This rule is in place to facilitate safe navigation and to minimize potential conflict between different types of vessels. Other scenarios mentioned may not provide a basis for the sailing vessel's right of way. The size of the vessel or whether it is in a narrow channel does not inherently grant the sailing vessel priority. Also, if a sailing vessel is operating under engine power, it loses its status as a sailing vessel, which could change the right of way dynamics as prescribed by the COLREGs. Therefore, the situation where both vessels are on a collision course, with the sailing vessel on the windward side, clearly supports the rule regarding the right of way.

7. What does Rule 21 cover regarding lights and shapes?

- A. It describes how to exhibit proper lights for various types of vessels
- B. It lists the types of vessels required to travel at night
- C. It defines how vessels should signal under sail
- D. It specifies what colors lights should be for safety

Rule 21 of the COLREGs, titled "Definitions," does cover the exhibition of proper lights for various types of vessels. This rule provides essential definitions related to navigation lights and shapes, which are crucial for safe navigation, particularly at night or during periods of restricted visibility. By establishing how different classes of vessels are required to display their lights, Rule 21 helps to ensure that mariners can identify the type and status of approaching vessels, which is critical for preventing collisions at sea. Understanding these requirements helps navigators recognize whether a vessel is at anchor, underway, or engaged in fishing, among other activities, thus promoting safe maritime practices. The other options do not accurately reflect the focus of Rule 21. The requirement to exhibit lights is a key safety aspect that directly impacts a vessel's ability to navigate safely in various conditions.

8. What is the primary purpose of the COLREGs?

- A. To prevent collisions between vessels at sea
- B. To regulate maritime commerce
- C. To ensure environmental protection at sea
- D. To maintain speed limits for vessels

The primary purpose of the COLREGs, or the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, is to prevent collisions between vessels at sea. This fundamental objective is crucial for ensuring the safety of life at sea and protecting maritime property. The COLREGs establish a set of rules that govern the conduct of vessels in various situations, providing guidance on navigation, right-of-way, and necessary actions to avoid collisions. While other choices touch on important aspects of maritime operations, they do not encompass the primary goal of the COLREGs. Regulating maritime commerce, ensuring environmental protection, and maintaining speed limits are all essential components of maritime law and regulations but fall outside the specific scope of preventing collisions, which is the core focus of the COLREGs. The rules promote situational awareness among mariners and emphasize the responsibility of vessels to avoid incidents that may lead to accidents on the water, thus safeguarding not only the vessels and their crews but also the marine environment.

9. What is required of every vessel regarding look-out?

- A. Only visual observations must be made
- B. A proper look-out must be maintained by sight, hearing, and other means**
- C. Look-out is only necessary in foggy conditions
- D. Only the captain needs to maintain a look-out

Every vessel is required to maintain a proper look-out by sight, hearing, and other means to ensure safe navigation and to avoid collisions. This requirement is a fundamental principle under the COLREGs, specifically Rule 5, which emphasizes the importance of being aware of the surrounding environment at all times. A proper look-out enables a vessel to detect other vessels, navigational hazards, and changing conditions, thereby allowing for timely reactions to potential dangers. The mention of using multiple senses, such as sight and hearing, acknowledges that not all hazards can be detected visually, especially in varying weather conditions or at night. Reliance solely on visual observations would limit situational awareness and increase the risk of accidents. The other options are limited in scope; suggesting that look-out is only necessary in foggy conditions ignores the need for vigilance at all times, while stating that only the captain needs to maintain a look-out overlooks the shared responsibility of all crew members. This holistic approach to the look-out aligns with the aim of maritime safety, ensuring that everyone on board contributes to the vessel's awareness and navigational safety.

10. What defines a head-on situation between two vessels?

- A. When one vessel has the other on its starboard side
- B. When vessels see each other nearly ahead and can observe masthead lights in line**
- C. When vessels are on a collision course but not approaching head-on
- D. When one vessel is overtaking the other

A head-on situation between two vessels is defined by the scenario where each vessel observes the other's masthead lights in line or nearly in line. This configuration indicates that the vessels are on a collision course, directly facing each other, leading to the need for action to avoid a collision. In such cases, the visibility of the masthead lights from either vessel signals that they are effectively navigating towards one another, creating a critical requirement for adherence to navigational rules under the COLREGs. This situation obligates both vessels to take appropriate measures to alter course to prevent a collision, usually by each vessel altering to starboard. Being able to see each other nearly ahead underscores the imminent risk of collision, distinguishing this scenario from situations where vessels are simply in proximity but not directly approaching each other head-on. Thus, the definition provided aligns with the principles outlined in the COLREGs, ensuring navigational safety by emphasizing the importance of communication and maneuvering in such circumstances.

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:

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

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