

COLREGS LIGHTS & SHAPES PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE

<https://coloregslightsshapes.examzify.com>



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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	16

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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. When must the rules regarding shapes be adhered to?**
 - A. During foggy conditions only
 - B. At night
 - C. By day
 - D. At sunset
- 2. What vessels may exhibit a 'blue flashing light'?**
 - A. Only fishing vessels in distress
 - B. Any government vessel providing assistance in any waters to any vessel or other craft, aircraft or person in distress or engaged in law enforcement
 - C. Commercial ships in emergency situations
 - D. Private yachts during rescue operations
- 3. What is the term for a pushing vessel and a pushed barge that are rigidly connected?**
 - A. Composite unit
 - B. Connection unit
 - C. Tow unit
 - D. Linked unit
- 4. What is the height restriction for foremast head light on vessels wider than 5 meters?**
 - A. 5 meters above the hull
 - B. Equal to their breadth
 - C. 4 meters above the hull
 - D. No maximum height
- 5. How much higher must the after masthead light be compared to the forward masthead light on a power-driven vessel?**
 - A. At least 1 meter higher
 - B. At least 2 meters higher
 - C. At least 3 meters higher
 - D. At least 5 meters higher

- 6. When two sailing vessels are approaching each other with the wind on opposite sides, which vessel is obligated to give way?**
- A. The vessel with the wind on the port side
 - B. The vessel with the wind on the starboard side
 - C. The faster vessel
 - D. The larger vessel
- 7. On a power-driven vessel of 20 meters or more, where should sidelights be positioned?**
- A. In front of the forward masthead lights
 - B. On the deck of the vessel
 - C. At the aft of the vessel
 - D. Not in front of the forward masthead lights
- 8. When shall the white flashing lights on an oil rig be exhibited?**
- A. Only during the day
 - B. From 15 minutes before sunset until sunrise and anytime visibility is 2 miles or less in any direction
 - C. At all times
 - D. Only during inclement weather
- 9. What lights should a sailing vessel under 20 meters exhibit?**
- A. Only sidelights
 - B. Combination of sidelights and stern light
 - C. All-round white light only
 - D. Only a sternlight
- 10. What additional signal is exhibited by an air cushion vessel operating in non-displacement mode?**
- A. Flashing blue light
 - B. All-round flashing yellow light
 - C. Continuous white light
 - D. Two masthead lights

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. When must the rules regarding shapes be adhered to?

- A. During foggy conditions only
- B. At night
- C. By day
- D. At sunset

The rules regarding shapes must be adhered to at day because these shapes serve as a means of visual communication between vessels during daylight hours. The International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs) specify the use of shapes, such as flags, to indicate the type of vessel, its activity, and its status. During the day, mariners rely on these visual signals to ensure safe navigation and to understand the intentions of nearby vessels. Shapes communicate important information, such as whether a vessel is anchored, aground, or in tow. This visual signaling is essential for collision avoidance during daylight when visibility allows for these shapes to be seen. While shapes are still relevant at night, the use of lights takes precedence, and the compliance with shapes is not as critical during nighttime operations. In conditions like fog, vessels may rely more on sound signals or radar, and the same applies at sunset, where visibility may be compromised, further underlining the importance of shapes during daylight hours when they can be clearly observed.

2. What vessels may exhibit a 'blue flashing light'?

- A. Only fishing vessels in distress
- B. Any government vessel providing assistance in any waters to any vessel or other craft, aircraft or person in distress or engaged in law enforcement
- C. Commercial ships in emergency situations
- D. Private yachts during rescue operations

The presence of a 'blue flashing light' is specifically associated with government vessels that are engaged in providing assistance or conducting law enforcement operations. This lighting is utilized to alert other vessels to the vessel's authority and its role in ensuring safety or enforcing laws on the water. When a government vessel has a blue flashing light, it indicates that it is either rendering assistance to another craft in distress or is involved in law enforcement activities, such as patrols or inspections. This use of the blue light serves to inform other mariners of the vessel's intention and authority, ensuring that appropriate actions can be taken by nearby vessels to avoid collisions or to comply with instructions from the government vessel. Other options do not apply because they either restrict the use of the blue light to specific types of vessels or situations not aligned with the regulations. For example, fishing vessels or commercial ships in emergencies have different signaling protocols and do not utilize a blue flashing light for distress signals. In relation to private yachts, there are no specific regulations that authorize them to use a blue flashing light during rescue operations, as this would typically lead to confusion with official government rescue signals.

3. What is the term for a pushing vessel and a pushed barge that are rigidly connected?

- A. Composite unit**
- B. Connection unit
- C. Tow unit
- D. Linked unit

The term for a pushing vessel and a pushed barge that are rigidly connected is a "composite unit." This designation is used within maritime regulations to describe a specific configuration where a vessel, typically a tug or a similar craft, and its barge or towed structure operate as a single navigational entity. This type of arrangement offers better maneuverability and stability compared to a simple towing operation because the two parts are connected in such a way that they behave as one unit in the water. The distinction of a composite unit is vital in the context of navigation and compliance with the COLREGs, as it informs the lighting and shape requirements for the unit. For example, composite units must display specific lights that indicate their configuration to other vessels, enhancing safety on the water. Other options like "connection unit," "tow unit," and "linked unit," do not have established meanings in maritime terminology concerning the COLREGs. While they may loosely describe similar concepts, they are not the recognized terminology used internationally to denote the particular arrangement of a pushing vessel and a pushed barge that are rigidly connected. Thus, understanding the terminology and its proper application is crucial for safe navigation practices.

4. What is the height restriction for foremast head light on vessels wider than 5 meters?

- A. 5 meters above the hull
- B. Equal to their breadth**
- C. 4 meters above the hull
- D. No maximum height

For vessels wider than 5 meters, the foremast head light must be set at a height that is equal to their breadth. This regulation ensures that the light is visible from a distance and effectively serves its purpose of indicating the vessel's presence and direction to other boats and navigational aids. The requirement aligns with the overall aim of maritime safety and ensures that larger vessels maintain an appropriate height for their masthead lights, allowing for better visibility in varied sea conditions. A height restriction of equal to the vessel's breadth provides a standard that accounts for different vessel widths while ensuring that the light remains effective. In this context, alternatives that suggest fixed or lower heights, such as limiting it to 4 or 5 meters above the hull, do not adequately accommodate the diversity of vessel sizes and their operational requirements. Additionally, allowing no maximum height could lead to excessively tall lights that might create risks of collision or obfuscate navigation.

5. How much higher must the after masthead light be compared to the forward masthead light on a power-driven vessel?

- A. At least 1 meter higher
- B. At least 2 meters higher**
- C. At least 3 meters higher
- D. At least 5 meters higher

The correct answer is that the after masthead light on a power-driven vessel must be at least 2 meters higher than the forward masthead light. This requirement is based on the COLREGs (International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea), which specify the arrangement of lights on power-driven vessels to ensure that they are easily distinguishable by other vessels. The height difference is crucial for several reasons. First, it helps to clearly indicate the vessel's direction and heading to other mariners. The increased height of the aft masthead light ensures that it can be seen over other structures or obstructions on the vessel and helps to reduce confusion. By having the aft light positioned higher, it provides a clear visual cue that distinguishes the orientation and operating status of the vessel, which is essential for collision avoidance. This requirement is specifically designed to enhance visibility and improve safety on the waters, making sure that vessels are appropriately recognized and identified at a distance. In practice, this height difference translates to the aft masthead light being installed at least 2 meters above the forward masthead light to maintain compliance with the regulations and promote safe navigation.

6. When two sailing vessels are approaching each other with the wind on opposite sides, which vessel is obligated to give way?

- A. The vessel with the wind on the port side**
- B. The vessel with the wind on the starboard side
- C. The faster vessel
- D. The larger vessel

When two sailing vessels are approaching each other with the wind on opposite sides, the vessel that has the wind on the port side is required to give way. In sailing, this situation is referred to as when two sailing boats are on a reciprocal course and are approaching each other with the wind on different sides. In this scenario, the vessel with the wind on the starboard side has the right of way. This is consistent with the rules of the road for sailing vessels, which state that the boat with wind on the starboard tack effectively holds the preferred status and expects the other vessel to take action to avoid a collision. Therefore, the vessel with the wind on the port side must give way to the vessel on the starboard tack to ensure safe navigation and adherence to maritime rules. The rules governing right of way in sailing focus on tacking position (starboard and port), rather than other factors such as speed or size. Thus, the consideration of speed or size as a determining factor in this case would not apply.

7. On a power-driven vessel of 20 meters or more, where should sidelights be positioned?

- A. In front of the forward masthead lights
- B. On the deck of the vessel
- C. At the aft of the vessel
- D. Not in front of the forward masthead lights**

For a power-driven vessel of 20 meters or more in length, the sidelights must be positioned correctly to ensure effective visibility and recognition by other vessels. The correct placement of sidelights is essential for maritime safety, as they indicate the sides of your vessel to others. Sidelights should be positioned such that they are visible to other vessels approaching from the side or front, but they need to be located at a height and distance that does not interfere with the visibility of the forward masthead lights. By placing the sidelights not in front of the forward masthead lights, the sidelights avoid obstruction and clearly designate the port (red) and starboard (green) sides of the vessel. This arrangement is crucial, especially when vessels are navigating in proximity, as it helps in determining the relative headings and courses of each vessel. In sum, the requirement that sidelights should not be in front of the forward masthead lights ensures that all navigational lights serve their proper function without causing confusion about the vessel's orientation or direction of travel.

8. When shall the white flashing lights on an oil rig be exhibited?

- A. Only during the day
- B. From 15 minutes before sunset until sunrise and anytime visibility is 2 miles or less in any direction**
- C. At all times
- D. Only during inclement weather

The correct answer is that white flashing lights on an oil rig shall be exhibited from 15 minutes before sunset until sunrise and anytime visibility is 2 miles or less in any direction. This requirement is based on the need to ensure proper visibility and safety in navigational areas, especially for vessels operating near the oil rig. The regulation aims to prevent collisions and enhance the awareness of the oil rig's presence, particularly during times when natural light is diminished or visibility is restricted. By requiring these lights to be displayed both during low-light conditions (such as at night and during sunset) and during periods of poor visibility, the risk of accidents is significantly reduced. Other options do not meet the necessary criteria for safe navigation. For instance, exhibiting lights only during the day would not adequately warn vessels during critical evening and nighttime hours. Displaying lights at all times may cause unnecessary light pollution and could lead to confusion since the lights are specifically intended for certain visibility conditions. Lastly, limiting the exhibition of lights to only inclement weather fails to account for regular nighttime operations or adverse visibility conditions that can occur even in clear weather.

9. What lights should a sailing vessel under 20 meters exhibit?

- A. Only sidelights
- B. Combination of sidelights and stern light**
- C. All-round white light only
- D. Only a sternlight

For a sailing vessel under 20 meters in length, the correct configuration of lights to exhibit is a combination of sidelights and a stern light. This setup allows other vessels to easily identify the sailing vessel's orientation and direction of travel. Sidelights are used to indicate the presence and the sides of the vessel; the port side light is red and the starboard side light is green. The addition of a stern light, which is white, helps to provide thorough visibility from behind, indicating the vessel's position and direction to other boats that may be approaching from the stern. This combination of lights is crucial for ensuring safe navigation in both daylight and nighttime conditions, contributing to the awareness of other vessels in the area and fostering effective communication of a vessel's movements. Options that suggest displaying only sidelights or only a stern light do not align with the COLREGs requirements for lights on sailing vessels. The presence of both sidelights and a stern light is essential for a complete representation of the vessel's navigation status.

10. What additional signal is exhibited by an air cushion vessel operating in non-displacement mode?

- A. Flashing blue light
- B. All-round flashing yellow light**
- C. Continuous white light
- D. Two masthead lights

The correct additional signal exhibited by an air cushion vessel operating in non-displacement mode is an all-round flashing yellow light. This signal is specifically designated to indicate the unique nature of air cushion vehicles, which do not operate like traditional boats or ships that sit in the water. The all-round flashing yellow light serves as a visual cue to other vessels that the air cushion vessel is not in displacement mode, helping to prevent collisions and ensuring that operators are aware of the vessel's operational status. Additionally, this signaling is crucial for maintaining safety on the waterways, as traditional signals used by displacement vessels may not accurately communicate the maneuverability and travel characteristics of air cushion vessels. The other answer options do not correspond with the recognized signals established by maritime regulations for this type of vessel in that operational mode.

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://coloregslightsshapes.examzify.com>

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

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