

COLREGs Rules of the Road Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



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SAMPLE

Questions

- 1. What do COLREGS primarily govern?**
 - A. The rights of fishermen on water**
 - B. International rules applicable to all oceans and connected bodies of water**
 - C. The design and construction of vessels**
 - D. The training requirements for boat captains**
- 2. What signaling devices must a vessel between 20 to 100 meters have?**
 - A. Whistle and bell**
 - B. Whistle and foghorn**
 - C. Only a bell**
 - D. Whistle, gong, and bell**
- 3. When is a vessel considered "underway"?**
 - A. When it is anchored**
 - B. When it is moored to a dock**
 - C. When it is not grounded, anchored, or attached to shore**
 - D. When it is in dry dock**
- 4. The hierarchy of vessels is based on what criteria?**
 - A. Maneuverability**
 - B. Size of the vessel**
 - C. Speed of the vessel**
 - D. Type of cargo**
- 5. What is the color of the side light on a starboard side of a vessel?**
 - A. Red**
 - B. Green**
 - C. White**
 - D. Blue**

- 6. What aspect of vessel operation does Rule 20 emphasize?**
- A. Signals based on the type of vessel**
 - B. Vessel signaling based on varying circumstances**
 - C. Navigation in shallow waters**
 - D. Weather conditions affecting voyage plans**
- 7. Which light is specifically defined as showing an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of 225 degrees?**
- A. Side light**
 - B. Stern light**
 - C. Masthead light**
 - D. Towing light**
- 8. What does Rule 29 signify for vessels in an emergency situation?**
- A. They may signal using specific sound tones to indicate their status**
 - B. They must anchor immediately to avoid danger**
 - C. They have the right-of-way over all other vessels**
 - D. They should keep their lights on at all times**
- 9. What is the guiding principle of safe navigation as highlighted in COLREGs?**
- A. Prioritizing speed over safety**
 - B. Avoiding a collision at all costs**
 - C. Following physical navigation markers only**
 - D. Maintaining a strict course regardless of conditions**
- 10. What are the three types of sound signaling devices required for a vessel over 100 meters?**
- A. Whistle, bell, and gong**
 - B. Horn, whistle, and light**
 - C. Bell, siren, and sounder**
 - D. Whistle, light, and flashing signal**

Answers

SAMPLE

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

SAMPLE

Explanations

SAMPLE

1. What do COLREGS primarily govern?

- A. The rights of fishermen on water
- B. International rules applicable to all oceans and connected bodies of water**
- C. The design and construction of vessels
- D. The training requirements for boat captains

COLREGs, or the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, primarily govern the conduct of vessels on the high seas and in all navigable waters. This means they establish the rules for navigation, defining the responsibilities of vessels to avoid collisions, ensuring safe and orderly traffic among diverse maritime users. The regulations provide a framework that applies universally, thus enhancing safety standards across all oceans and connected bodies of water. By adhering to these rules, mariners help to mitigate risks associated with maritime navigation, promoting safety and efficiency in international waters. The other options, while relevant to specific aspects of maritime operations, do not encapsulate the broader purpose of COLREGs. For instance, rules governing the rights of fishermen would fall under different regulatory frameworks, and the design and construction of vessels, as well as training requirements for boat captains, are addressed in other maritime safety regulations and standards rather than by COLREGs themselves.

2. What signaling devices must a vessel between 20 to 100 meters have?

- A. Whistle and bell**
- B. Whistle and foghorn
- C. Only a bell
- D. Whistle, gong, and bell

A vessel measuring between 20 to 100 meters in length is required to carry specific signaling devices as per the regulations established in the COLREGs. The correct answer indicates that such a vessel must have a whistle and a bell as its sound signaling devices. The whistle serves as an essential instrument for signaling in various maritime situations, particularly for communication with other vessels to prevent collisions. It is typically used to produce sound signals that communicate a vessel's actions or intentions to nearby vessels. The bell, in addition to the whistle, plays a crucial role in indicating the presence of the vessel, especially when at anchor. The requirement for having both devices ensures that the vessel can effectively signal its position and maneuvers, which is vital for safe navigation, particularly in areas where visibility may be compromised. In contrast, the other options provided either suggest combinations of devices that exceed the necessary requirements or include devices that are not mandated for vessels of this size under the COLREGs. This clarifies the requirements set forth to ensure clear maritime communication while adhering to international safety standards.

3. When is a vessel considered "underway"?

- A. When it is anchored
- B. When it is moored to a dock
- C. When it is not grounded, anchored, or attached to shore**
- D. When it is in dry dock

A vessel is considered "underway" when it is not grounded, anchored, or attached to shore. This definition is crucial in maritime navigation and safety because it indicates that the vessel is in motion, capable of being navigated, and able to respond to the surrounding navigational situation. Underway status means that the vessel is free to maneuver and is obliged to adhere to the rules governing navigation, such as those established by the COLREGs. Being "anchored" or "moored to a dock" clearly defines a state of rest and attachment to the seabed or shore, which means the vessel is not free to navigate. Additionally, when a vessel is in dry dock, it is out of the water and cannot be considered underway either. Understanding these distinctions is vital for effective navigation and compliance with maritime regulations.

4. The hierarchy of vessels is based on what criteria?

- A. Maneuverability**
- B. Size of the vessel
- C. Speed of the vessel
- D. Type of cargo

The hierarchy of vessels in maritime navigation is primarily based on maneuverability. This concept is fundamental in the COLREGs, as it establishes which vessel has the right of way in various situations encountered at sea. A vessel that is less maneuverable, such as a large cargo ship, is afforded priority over smaller or more agile vessels, like recreational boats or fishing vessels. This consideration is critical when determining how vessels should interact and avoid collisions, particularly in crowded waterways. While the other criteria—size, speed, and type of cargo—can play roles in vessel operation and navigation, they do not fundamentally establish the right of way in the same way maneuverability does. Size may influence the vessel's ability to respond under different conditions, but it does not necessarily dictate its operational priority. Similarly, speed can impact the dynamics of a situation but does not define which vessel must yield to another. The type of cargo may affect the stability and handling of a vessel, yet it is not a recognized factor in the rules regarding right of way. Hence, maneuverability stands out as the primary criterion in creating the hierarchy among vessels.

5. What is the color of the side light on a starboard side of a vessel?

- A. Red**
- B. Green**
- C. White**
- D. Blue**

The side light on the starboard side of a vessel is green. According to the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs), vessels are required to display specific lights to indicate their position and orientation to other vessels. The green light represents the starboard side, while the red light represents the port side. This color distinction is critical for navigational safety, as it allows mariners to identify a vessel's direction and operational status during the nighttime or in poor visibility conditions. Thus, the green light on the starboard side enables other vessels to determine whether they are encountering the vessel head-on, overtaking it, or crossing its path, which is essential for safe navigation.

6. What aspect of vessel operation does Rule 20 emphasize?

- A. Signals based on the type of vessel**
- B. Vessel signaling based on varying circumstances**
- C. Navigation in shallow waters**
- D. Weather conditions affecting voyage plans**

Rule 20 of the COLREGs addresses the importance of vessel signaling according to varying circumstances. This rule emphasizes the need for vessels to display appropriate signals, such as lights and shapes, that convey their presence, activities, and navigational status, adapted to the conditions they encounter. The intent is to ensure safe navigation and communication among vessels during different operational scenarios, which may include day or night conditions, restricted visibility, or proximity to other vessels. The application of this rule is crucial because it allows mariners to make informed decisions based on the signals they observe, enhancing situational awareness and preventing collisions. Thus, understanding and adhering to Rule 20 is essential for maintaining safety in maritime operations, as it guides how vessels should communicate their status in response to changing environmental and traffic conditions.

7. Which light is specifically defined as showing an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of 225 degrees?

- A. Side light**
- B. Stern light**
- C. Masthead light**
- D. Towing light**

The masthead light is specifically defined in the COLREGs as showing an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of 225 degrees. This type of light is displayed on vessels that are underway, and it helps to indicate the presence and heading of the vessel to other nearby vessels. According to the COLREGs, the masthead light is usually positioned at the highest point of the vessel to maximize its visibility, ensuring that it can be seen by other vessels from a significant distance, particularly from the front and the sides. The specification of 225 degrees means that the light should be visible from the bow and for a substantial portion of the sides, which is crucial for collision avoidance at night or during periods of reduced visibility. In contrast, other types of lights serve different purposes and have different visibility arcs. For instance, side lights cover 112.5 degrees each and are used to show the port and starboard sides of a vessel, while a stern light covers 135 degrees and is displayed from the back of the vessel. A towing light typically has a different specification as well, as it indicates that the vessel is engaged in towing operations but does not have the same configuration as the masthead light.

8. What does Rule 29 signify for vessels in an emergency situation?

- A. They may signal using specific sound tones to indicate their status**
- B. They must anchor immediately to avoid danger**
- C. They have the right-of-way over all other vessels**
- D. They should keep their lights on at all times**

Rule 29 of the COLREGs specifically addresses the actions that vessels should take in emergency situations. When a vessel finds itself in distress, it is permitted to signal its status using specific sound signals. These signals are designed to communicate its condition to other vessels in the vicinity, ensuring that nearby boats are aware of the emergency and can offer assistance if able. This rule emphasizes the importance of communication in navigational safety, especially during critical situations when quick recognition by other vessels can be vital for the safety of the distressed vessel and crew. Sound signals are an effective means of conveying the nature of the emergency without the need for visual signals, which may be difficult to see in certain conditions or during the night. Therefore, signaling using specific sound tones is the proper action for vessels in an emergency situation as outlined by Rule 29.

9. What is the guiding principle of safe navigation as highlighted in COLREGs?

- A. Prioritizing speed over safety**
- B. Avoiding a collision at all costs**
- C. Following physical navigation markers only**
- D. Maintaining a strict course regardless of conditions**

The guiding principle of safe navigation as highlighted in the COLREGs is centered around avoiding a collision at all costs. This principle emphasizes the importance of maritime safety and the responsibility of vessels to take necessary actions to prevent accidents at sea. In the context of COLREGs, the rules clearly state that mariners should be proactive in their decision-making to ensure safety on the water. This includes assessing the situation continually and reacting appropriately to the actions of other vessels, weather conditions, and navigational hazards. The concept of avoiding collisions is fundamental to the responsibilities outlined in the rules, as it underscores the duty of care that all mariners must observe. Proper navigation involves not just adherence to physical markers or specific courses but prioritizing the safety of all vessels by ensuring that actions taken prevent potential collisions. This approach aligns with the overarching goal of maintaining safe navigation, which cannot be compromised for speed or rigid adherence to a set course.

10. What are the three types of sound signaling devices required for a vessel over 100 meters?

- A. Whistle, bell, and gong**
- B. Horn, whistle, and light**
- C. Bell, siren, and sounder**
- D. Whistle, light, and flashing signal**

The correct answer identifies the required sound signaling devices for vessels over 100 meters as a whistle, bell, and gong. According to the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs), vessels of this size must be equipped with these specific devices to ensure effective signaling in various maritime conditions. The whistle is essential for communication between vessels, especially in situations of limited visibility or navigation challenges. It produces a loud sound that can be heard over considerable distances. The bell serves a similar purpose, primarily as a signal indicating the presence of the vessel and its maneuvers, particularly in dense fog or other obstructive conditions. Lastly, the gong is used in very large vessels to signal their presence and intentions, especially when they are at anchor or in restricted waters. This combination of devices is mandated to enhance maritime safety by ensuring that vessels can communicate clearly and effectively to avoid collisions and navigate safely in busy or hazardous waterways. Other options may mention different devices, but they do not align with the specific requirements set forth in the COLREGs for vessels over 100 meters in length.