

SURFACE WARFARE OFFICER (SWO) BOARD PRACTICE EXAM (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



**SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE
WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS**

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THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE**

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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. Which item is NOT listed as a watch-prep step?**
 - A. Rest and fuel up
 - B. Tour Controlling Spaces
 - C. Read POD
 - D. Exercise to exhaustion

- 2. Which of the following is an example of an engineering control used to mitigate shipboard hazards?**
 - A. Guard rails, ventilation, and interlocks.
 - B. Relying on memory.
 - C. Signage alone.
 - D. Crew social events.

- 3. In maritime safety, what is the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) and its purpose?**
 - A. An international system that uses satellite and terrestrial networks to transmit distress signals and safety communications to ensure rapid alert and response.
 - B. A shipboard fuel management system.
 - C. A navigation chart publication service.
 - D. An internal messaging system for crew communication only.

- 4. Which is the first step in the ORM process?**
 - A. Identify the Hazards
 - B. Assess the Hazards
 - C. Make Risk Decisions
 - D. Implement Controls

- 5. In the 6-minute rule, how is distance in nautical miles calculated?**
 - A. speed * 10
 - B. speed / 10
 - C. speed - 10
 - D. speed + 10

- 6. Why are accurate log entries essential for legal proceedings and after-action reviews?**
- A. They establish an official record of events, decisions, and actions, enabling accountability and learning from experiences.
 - B. They are optional personal notes.
 - C. They are used to forecast weather.
 - D. They are used for payroll.
- 7. In shipboard electrical power distribution, what are the roles of a generator and an inverter, and how do they support essential systems?**
- A. Generators produce AC power; inverters convert DC to AC power; together they ensure critical systems remain powered during power transitions or outages.
 - B. Generators convert DC to AC; inverters produce AC power; together they increase ship speed.
 - C. Generators store energy; inverters provide mechanical power.
 - D. Generators make fuel; inverters store power.
- 8. Which of the following is a responsibility of the Navy Career Counselor (NCC)?**
- A. Oversees deck operations
 - B. Manages ships numbers; helps sailors with exams; keeps sailors on track
 - C. Controls weather routing
 - D. Directs security programs
- 9. CSMC stands for Combat Systems Maintenance Central and is an underway controlling station. True or False?**
- A. True
 - B. False
 - C. Not specified
 - D. Not an underway station
- 10. What does GOLF indicate?**
- A. Replenishing
 - B. Diver Down
 - C. Guide
 - D. Preparative for replenishing

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which item is NOT listed as a watch-prep step?

- A. Rest and fuel up
- B. Tour Controlling Spaces
- C. Read POD
- D. Exercise to exhaustion**

Preparing for watch aims to maximize alertness, situational awareness, and readiness for duty. Resting and fueling up ensures you have the energy and stamina for the watch cycle. Touring the Controlling Spaces helps you know exactly where to access and operate critical systems, so you're not scrambling under pressure. Reading the Plan of the Day keeps you informed of the current plan, duties, and any special instructions you must follow. Exercising to exhaustion, by contrast, would drain energy and impair alertness and judgment just before you're on watch. It undermines readiness and safety, which is why that option isn't a watch-prep step.

2. Which of the following is an example of an engineering control used to mitigate shipboard hazards?

- A. Guard rails, ventilation, and interlocks.**
- B. Relying on memory.
- C. Signage alone.
- D. Crew social events.

Engineering controls are physical changes to the ship or its systems that reduce hazard exposure at the source. Guard rails provide a physical barrier to prevent falls, ventilation removes or dilutes dangerous fumes or smoke, and interlocks ensure equipment cannot operate or doors cannot open when safety conditions aren't met. These modifications change the environment or equipment to lower risk before human behavior comes into play. Relying on memory or signage alone doesn't change the hazard itself; it depends on people remembering to act or reading a sign, which can fail. Crew social events don't address hazards in the work environment either.

3. In maritime safety, what is the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) and its purpose?

- A. An international system that uses satellite and terrestrial networks to transmit distress signals and safety communications to ensure rapid alert and response.**
- B. A shipboard fuel management system.
- C. A navigation chart publication service.
- D. An internal messaging system for crew communication only.

Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) is an international framework that provides automated, redundant distress and safety communications for ships and coast stations, ensuring rapid alerting and response anywhere at sea. It uses both satellite and terrestrial networks—DSC on VHF, MF, and HF radios plus satellite links—to transmit distress signals with the vessel's identity and position, and to disseminate safety information through systems like SafetyNET and NAVTEX. The aim is to minimize the time it takes to alert rescue authorities and to coordinate search and rescue by providing a standardized, worldwide method for emergency communication that can reach competent authorities quickly, even in remote areas. This capability is mandated by SOLAS to maintain universal standards for equipment and procedures across ships globally. The other options refer to unrelated systems—fuel management, chart publication services, or internal crew messaging—so they do not describe what GMDSS does.

4. Which is the first step in the ORM process?

- A. Identify the Hazards
- B. Assess the Hazards
- C. Make Risk Decisions
- D. Implement Controls

Identifying hazards comes first because you must know what could go wrong before you can evaluate risk or decide on mitigations. Hazards are anything with the potential to cause harm or loss in the operation, and listing them establishes the foundation for everything that follows. Once hazards are identified, you assess them to gauge the level of risk, then make risk decisions on how to treat that risk, implement the chosen controls, and finally supervise to ensure the controls are effective. Without identifying hazards at the outset, subsequent steps would be unfocused or incomplete, since they would be based on assumptions rather than known potential problems.

5. In the 6-minute rule, how is distance in nautical miles calculated?

- A. speed * 10
- B. speed / 10
- C. speed - 10
- D. speed + 10

The main idea is that distance equals speed times time, with speed in knots meaning nautical miles per hour. Six minutes is one-tenth of an hour, so the distance traveled at a given speed is $\text{speed} \times 0.1$, which is the same as speed divided by 10. That's why the six-minute rule gives distance in nautical miles as $\text{speed}/10$. For example, at 18 knots you'd cover 1.8 nautical miles in six minutes ($18 \times 0.1 = 1.8$). The other options don't reflect the time factor (0.1 hour) and would produce incorrect distances.

6. Why are accurate log entries essential for legal proceedings and after-action reviews?

- A. They establish an official record of events, decisions, and actions, enabling accountability and learning from experiences.
- B. They are optional personal notes.
- C. They are used to forecast weather.
- D. They are used for payroll.

Accurate log entries create an official, time-stamped record of what happened, who did what, when, where, and why. In legal proceedings, that record serves as credible evidence that can be scrutinized to establish the sequence of events, identify responsibility, and show the rationale behind decisions. It also helps preserve the integrity of the information, supporting due process and the ability to defend actions if questions arise. For after-action reviews, precise entries provide a solid factual basis to compare what was planned with what actually occurred, revealing successes, deviations, and root causes. This enables meaningful learning, informed improvements to procedures and training, and better preparedness for future operations. When entries are inaccurate or incomplete, it becomes difficult to reconstruct events or justify actions, undermining both accountability and learning. Hence, they establish an official record of events, enabling accountability and learning from experiences.

7. In shipboard electrical power distribution, what are the roles of a generator and an inverter, and how do they support essential systems?

- A. Generators produce AC power; inverters convert DC to AC power; together they ensure critical systems remain powered during power transitions or outages.
- B. Generators convert DC to AC; inverters produce AC power; together they increase ship speed.
- C. Generators store energy; inverters provide mechanical power.

D. Generators make fuel; inverters store power.

In shipboard power distribution, the roles of generation and conversion are what keep essential systems alive during transitions or outages. A generator's job is to convert mechanical energy from the ship's prime mover into electrical energy, typically AC power that feeds the distribution buses. An inverter takes DC energy—usually from batteries or a DC bus—and converts it into AC power to support loads when AC from the generators isn't available or during a transfer between sources. This arrangement lets critical systems—such as navigation, communications, sensors, weapons, and life-support—remain powered if a generator trip occurs or during the handoff between power sources. The idea is to have a reliable AC supply from various sources so there's little to no disruption to essential operations. The other statements aren't accurate because they either describe generators as storing energy or making fuel, or describe inverters as providing mechanical power or storing energy. Neither storage nor fuel creation is the function of these devices, and their real role is converting between mechanical energy (via the generator) and electrical energy (via the inverter) to maintain continuous power to critical systems.

8. Which of the following is a responsibility of the Navy Career Counselor (NCC)?

- A. Oversees deck operations
- B. Manages ships numbers; helps sailors with exams; keeps sailors on track**
- C. Controls weather routing
- D. Directs security programs

The main idea here is that the Navy Career Counselor focuses on a sailor's professional development and path through the Navy. The NCC's job is to guide career progression, help with advancement and exams, and keep a sailor's career goals on track. The described duties—managing manpower numbers (ensuring proper staffing and assignments), assisting sailors with exams, and helping them stay on course for advancement—line up exactly with what an NCC does: they manage career trajectories, support exam preparation and eligibility, and monitor progress toward reenlistment or higher paygrades. By contrast, overseeing deck operations, weather routing, or directing security programs are functions handled by other specialties or departments (deck, METOC, and Security/Force Protection, respectively). So this choice best matches the NCC's responsibilities.

9. CSMC stands for Combat Systems Maintenance Central and is an underway controlling station. True or False?

A. True

B. False

C. Not specified

D. Not an underway station

Combat Systems Maintenance Central is a centralized hub responsible for monitoring, diagnosing, and coordinating maintenance actions on the ship's combat systems. When it's designated as an underway controlling station, it means this center is used to oversee and manage those maintenance and readiness tasks while the ship is moving at sea, ensuring combat systems remain operational during operations and transit. That combination—centralized maintenance authority and operation during underway—fits the shipboard practice for keeping critical combat systems ready when the ship is deployed, so stating that the CSMC is an underway controlling station is true.

10. What does GOLF indicate?

A. Replenishing

B. Diver Down

C. Guide

D. Preparative for replenishing

GOLF communicates a request for a guide to navigation. In the maritime signaling system, the flag for G signals that the vessel needs a harbor pilot or guide to lead it safely through approach channels, harbor waters, or other constrained areas. This helps ensure the ship follows the local charts and traffic patterns with someone who knows the area well. So the best interpretation is that it indicates you need a guide (pilot) on board or to assist with navigation. Other signals refer to different situations—divers in the water, or replenishment operations—so they don't match the purpose of Golf.

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://swoboard.examzify.com>

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

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