

USCG Rules of the Road Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



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SAMPLE

Questions

- 1. A vessel "restricted in her ability to maneuver" is one which _____.
A. is unable to maneuver as required by the rules
B. is limited in its speed
C. is under tow
D. is anchored in a busy channel**
- 2. In what situation would a power-driven vessel display sidelights and one tow light?
A. While sailing in open waters
B. While at anchor
C. While pushing ahead or towing alongside
D. While maneuvering through a narrow channel**
- 3. What best describes traffic separation schemes?
A. Paths for each type of vessel
B. Designated lanes for incoming and outgoing vessels
C. A system of buoys for navigation
D. Fixed points for anchoring vessels**
- 4. Why is it important to have a lookout according to Rule 5?
A. To prevent fishing in restricted areas
B. To enhance onboard safety by observing other vessels
C. To comply with local maritime laws
D. To navigate through crowded harbors safely**
- 5. You are meeting another power-driven vessel head-on and sound one short blast as a passing signal. The other vessel answers with two short blasts. What should be your next action?
A. Sound the danger signal
B. Sound another one short blast
C. Change course to starboard
D. Maintain your course and speed**

- 6. A vessel approaching your vessel from 235° relative is in what type of situation?**
- A. Overtaking**
 - B. Crossing**
 - C. Head-on**
 - D. Meeting**
- 7. What action should a vessel take when it is determined to be the give-way vessel?**
- A. Continue at the same speed**
 - B. Alter its course or speed to avoid a collision**
 - C. Signal its intentions clearly**
 - D. Increase speed to pass quickly**
- 8. What should a vessel do when detecting another vessel using radar in low visibility?**
- A. Ignore the radar and maintain course**
 - B. Determine if a risk of collision exists**
 - C. Sound a prolonged blast only**
 - D. Reduce speed immediately without checking**
- 9. What does "Rule 5" require of every vessel regarding lookouts?**
- A. Every vessel must maintain a proper lookout by sight and hearing**
 - B. Only vessels over a certain size need to maintain a lookout**
 - C. Lookouts are only required during the night**
 - D. Vessels must have electronic lookouts in place**
- 10. Under the Rules, what is the requirement for a vessel that sees another vessel approaching in a narrow channel?**
- A. It must maintain its course and speed at all times**
 - B. It must reduce speed and be prepared to take evasive action**
 - C. It can ignore the other vessel**
 - D. It should sound its horn frequently**

Answers

SAMPLE

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

SAMPLE

Explanations

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1. A vessel "restricted in her ability to maneuver" is one which _____.

- A. is unable to maneuver as required by the rules**
- B. is limited in its speed**
- C. is under tow**
- D. is anchored in a busy channel**

The definition of a vessel "restricted in her ability to maneuver" is specifically tied to the operational limitations imposed on a vessel due to its work or conditions it faces. A vessel that is restricted in its ability to maneuver cannot take the necessary actions required by the maritime navigation rules due to certain conditions, such as when its ability to deviate from its course is hindered because it is engaged in tasks like diving operations, laying pipelines, servicing navigation marks, or other similar activities. This context makes it clear that the correct answer aligns with the established definitions in the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs) and the U.S. Coast Guard regulations. The other choices do not capture the essence of what it means for a vessel to be "restricted in her ability to maneuver." For example, simply being unable to maneuver as required does not cover the specific reasons a vessel might be restricted. Likewise, being limited in speed, under tow, or anchored in a busy channel describes other scenarios that do not encompass the specific operational restrictions that classify a vessel under this particular term.

2. In what situation would a power-driven vessel display sidelights and one tow light?

- A. While sailing in open waters**
- B. While at anchor**
- C. While pushing ahead or towing alongside**
- D. While maneuvering through a narrow channel**

A power-driven vessel is required to display sidelights and a tow light when it is engaged in towing operations, particularly when it is pushing ahead or towing alongside another vessel. The sidelights indicate the presence of the vessel and its direction, with the green light indicating the starboard side and the red light indicating the port side. The tow light, typically white and displayed above the sidelights, signifies that the vessel is engaged in towing. This combination of lights not only helps in identifying the vessel's capabilities but also provides essential information to other vessels regarding its function and navigation. In situations like sailing in open waters, being at anchor, or maneuvering through a narrow channel, different lighting configurations are required. For instance, at anchor, a vessel would display a single white light and not the sidelights or tow light. Similarly, the requirements for maneuvering through narrow channels would differ based on the specific circumstances and the types of vessels involved.

3. What best describes traffic separation schemes?

- A. Paths for each type of vessel
- B. Designated lanes for incoming and outgoing vessels**
- C. A system of buoys for navigation
- D. Fixed points for anchoring vessels

Traffic separation schemes are specifically designed to improve maritime safety by organizing vessel traffic in busy waterways. Designated lanes for incoming and outgoing vessels help ensure that ships travel in an orderly fashion, reducing the risk of collisions. These schemes often feature a centerline, which divides opposing traffic lanes, as well as specific routes for different types of vessels, assisting in the efficient management of maritime traffic. In contrast, paths for each type of vessel might imply a more general navigation system that is not as structured as a traffic separation scheme. A system of buoys for navigation refers to the markers that aid in navigation but do not provide the traffic management functions of a scheme. Fixed points for anchoring vessels focus on safe anchorage rather than the movement of vessels through heavy traffic areas. Therefore, the emphasis on clearly defined lanes for incoming and outgoing vessels accurately captures the essence and purpose of traffic separation schemes.

4. Why is it important to have a lookout according to Rule 5?

- A. To prevent fishing in restricted areas
- B. To enhance onboard safety by observing other vessels**
- C. To comply with local maritime laws
- D. To navigate through crowded harbors safely

Having a lookout is crucial for enhancing onboard safety by observing other vessels and potential hazards in the navigational environment. Rule 5 emphasizes the need for a proper lookout to ensure that all activities related to navigation are carried out safely. A lookout helps to detect changes in the surroundings, identify other vessels approaching, and spot potential dangers or obstacles that may not be visible from the helm or bridge. This proactive measure is essential in preventing collisions and ensuring that the vessel operates safely within its environment. While the other choices may touch upon various aspects of navigation, they do not address the primary function and importance of a lookout as outlined in Rule 5. For instance, preventing fishing in restricted areas and complying with local maritime laws are aspects of regulation and enforcement but do not directly connect to the role of enhancing safety onboard. Similarly, while safe navigation through crowded harbors involves being vigilant, it doesn't capture the broader safety implications of having a dedicated lookout at all times. Thus, the most accurate representation of Rule 5's intent is captured in the emphasis on safety through vigilance and observation, which is encapsulated in the correct answer.

5. You are meeting another power-driven vessel head-on and sound one short blast as a passing signal. The other vessel answers with two short blasts. What should be your next action?

- A. Sound the danger signal**
- B. Sound another one short blast**
- C. Change course to starboard**
- D. Maintain your course and speed**

In a situation where two power-driven vessels are meeting head-on and you sound one short blast intending to pass on the starboard side, the appropriate response from the other vessel is to acknowledge your signal. If they respond with two short blasts, this indicates that they intend to pass you on your port side. In this scenario, the correct action is to sound the danger signal. This is because the two blasts signify a potential misunderstanding or disagreement about the passing arrangements, indicating that the other vessel is not proceeding as expected. The danger signal is a means of alerting the other vessel that you believe a collision may occur and that an immediate course of action is necessary to prevent an accident. Changing course to starboard may not be the best choice since it does not address the communication failure indicated by their response. Similarly, if you sound another one short blast, it would not resolve the situation effectively since the other vessel's intentions are unclear. Maintaining your course and speed could potentially lead to a dangerous situation, as it may lead both vessels to be unaware that they might collide due to the different assumptions made about the passage. Thus, sounding the danger signal is the most prudent action to clarify the situation and keep safety as the priority.

6. A vessel approaching your vessel from 235° relative is in what type of situation?

- A. Overtaking**
- B. Crossing**
- C. Head-on**
- D. Meeting**

When a vessel approaches from 235° relative, this indicates that the angle between your vessel's bow and the approaching vessel is more than 180° but less than 270°. In the context of maritime navigation, a vessel on this relative bearing is considered to be overtaking your vessel. In overtaking situations, the following rule applies: the vessel that is being overtaken has the right of way, and the overtaking vessel must take action to avoid collision. According to the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs), an overtaking situation exists when one vessel approaches another from behind or at a bearing that places it in a position to overtake. This understanding clarifies the nature of the relationship between the two vessels, emphasizing the responsibilities each vessel has in maintaining safe navigation and collision avoidance.

7. What action should a vessel take when it is determined to be the give-way vessel?

- A. Continue at the same speed**
- B. Alter its course or speed to avoid a collision**
- C. Signal its intentions clearly**
- D. Increase speed to pass quickly**

When a vessel is determined to be the give-way vessel, it is required to take action to avoid a collision by altering its course or speed. This principle is grounded in maritime navigation rules which prioritize safety and the prevention of accidents on the water. The give-way vessel is typically in a position to maneuver and must do so to afford the stand-on vessel the opportunity to maintain its course and speed. This action can involve shifting the vessel's path to either starboard or port, or reducing its speed to create safe distance and time to ensure that a collision does not occur. Adhering to this rule fosters responsible navigation and helps ensure the safety of all vessels involved. Other options, such as continuing at the same speed or increasing speed, do not align with the responsibilities of the give-way vessel, as these actions may heighten the risk of an accident. Signaling intentions is important and can assist in communication but is not a substitute for the obligation to take action to avoid collision.

8. What should a vessel do when detecting another vessel using radar in low visibility?

- A. Ignore the radar and maintain course**
- B. Determine if a risk of collision exists**
- C. Sound a prolonged blast only**
- D. Reduce speed immediately without checking**

When a vessel detects another vessel using radar in low visibility, it is essential first to determine if a risk of collision exists. This process involves analyzing the radar data to assess the relative motion and distance of the other vessel, allowing the operator to make informed decisions to ensure safe navigation. By evaluating the potential for a collision, the vessel can take appropriate action, such as altering course or speed, to avoid any dangerous situations. This proactive approach aligns with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs), emphasizing the importance of maintaining situational awareness and making navigational decisions based on available information. In contrast, maintaining course without regard to detected vessels, sounding a prolonged blast without evaluating the situation, or reducing speed without understanding the risk could lead to unsafe scenarios. Navigating in low visibility conditions requires careful consideration and adherence to navigation rules to prevent collisions and protect all vessels involved.

9. What does "Rule 5" require of every vessel regarding lookouts?

A. Every vessel must maintain a proper lookout by sight and hearing

B. Only vessels over a certain size need to maintain a lookout

C. Lookouts are only required during the night

D. Vessels must have electronic lookouts in place

Rule 5 of the USCG Rules of the Road emphasizes the critical importance of maintaining a proper lookout by sight and hearing at all times. This requirement is fundamental to safe navigation and collision avoidance, regardless of the vessel's size, type, or the time of day. A lookout provides the navigational watch with additional situational awareness, enabling them to see and hear potential hazards and take appropriate actions to prevent accidents. The rule does not limit the responsibility to certain vessels or conditions; instead, it applies universally to all vessels engaged in navigation. This ensures that mariners are alert to the surroundings, including the presence of other vessels, navigational markers, and potential obstacles, thus enhancing safety on the water.

10. Under the Rules, what is the requirement for a vessel that sees another vessel approaching in a narrow channel?

A. It must maintain its course and speed at all times

B. It must reduce speed and be prepared to take evasive action

C. It can ignore the other vessel

D. It should sound its horn frequently

The requirement for a vessel that sees another vessel approaching in a narrow channel is to reduce speed and be prepared to take evasive action. This is essential for ensuring safety in narrow channels where the maneuvering space is limited. When two vessels are navigating a narrow channel, there is an increased risk of collision due to restricted space, and maintaining awareness of other vessels and potential hazards is crucial. By reducing speed, the vessel has more time to assess the situation and make informed decisions. Additionally, the ability to take evasive action is critical in preventing accidents and ensuring that both vessels can safely navigate. This response aligns with the principles laid out in the Navigation Rules, specifically those dealing with vessel conduct in restricted visibility and confined waterways. The other options do not align with the best practices for navigation in narrow channels. Maintaining course and speed at all times would increase the risk of collision and does not take into account the need for adjusting to other vessels' maneuvers. Ignoring the other vessel would violate the duties of vigilance and safe navigation required under the Rules. Sounding the horn frequently is not a requirement for communication in this context; rather, it should be used as a signal when necessary, but it does not replace the need for prudent navigation.