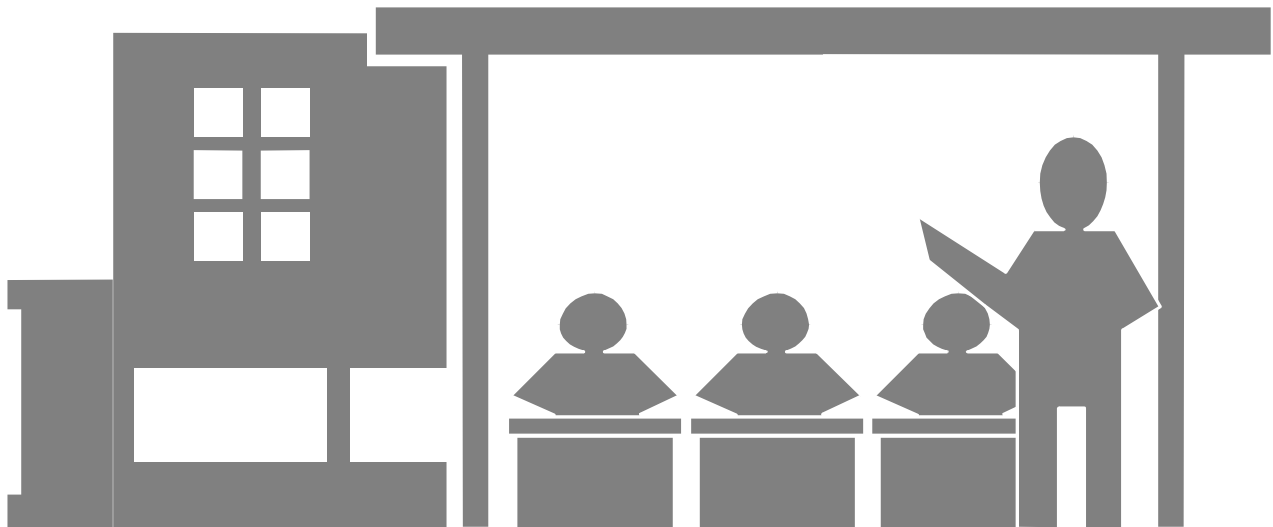




## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF COAST GUARD SERVICE WIDE EXAMINATIONS



**IMPORTANT:** All Exam Board members should read this booklet in it's entirety prior to each service wide exam cycle. This booklet contains specific instructions on receipt, administration and post exam procedures.

U. S. Coast Guard  
Personnel Service Center (ADV)  
(Updated JUN 2006)

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# Section 1 – General Information/Requirements for Exam Board Members

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**Introduction** This section provides general information and requirements for exam board members.

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**References** All exam board members must review the following directives in addition to this guide. These documents contain important information not discussed in this guide pertaining to the SWE process:

- a) The latest SWE Announcement Message (ALCGENL for regular SWE or ALCGPERSCOM for reserve SWE) available online at:  
[http://cgweb.comdt.uscg.mil/hsc\\_t-4/commcen/default.html](http://cgweb.comdt.uscg.mil/hsc_t-4/commcen/default.html)
- b) Personnel Manual, COMDTINST M1000.6A, 5-D-1 through 5-D-14 available online at:  
[http://cgweb2.comdt.uscg.mil/CGDIRECTIVES/CIM/CIM\\_1000\\_6A.pdf](http://cgweb2.comdt.uscg.mil/CGDIRECTIVES/CIM/CIM_1000_6A.pdf)
- c) PSCINST M1418.1 (series) available online at:  
<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/psc/adv/pscinstm1418series.pdf>

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## General Info & Requirements

- Return SWE materials within **three days** of the exam date. Holding answer sheets in your safe delays members from receiving their test scores and the SWE process. Not receipt of answer sheets at PSC (ADV) within three days will result in a message to the command requesting status.
- In accordance with PERSMAN, 5.D.6.a, the examining board shall consist of at least one commissioned officer. However, Master Chief and Senior Chief Petty officers servicing as Officer-in-Charge may serve as head of the local exam board if no commissioned officer is readily available and they are only administering exams for members desiring to advance to E7 and below.
- Civilian employees (preferably at the grade of GS9 or above) may be appointed by the CO.
- Only OINC's E8 and above are allowed to handle or store SWE's, otherwise it's to be an officer. If an ESO is not an officer, at a unit with officers attached, they may not have access to the safe where SWE's are stored. They need their own ESO safe for institute course exams and the SWE Officer needs a separate safe for SWE exams.
- The exam board may assign monitors (or proctors) to assist in test administration who are not in the current exam cycle, including:
  - Chief petty officers
  - Highly trusted senior petty officers
  - Civilian employees
- Proctors may assist in the SWE administration as long as the exam(s) being administered are not for pay grades above their own.
- The senior member of the exam board shall insure proper training of proctors.
- Proctors are not authorized to administer SWEs unless a commissioned officer or senior civilian employee is present.
- The senior exam board member (or officer designated as such), shall be in the room at all times during testing.
- Never open exam plastic bags prior to exam. Each candidate must receive a sealed exam at the scheduled date and time.
- Exam board members must give special attention to checking answer sheets (PSC-4801) for accuracy prior to mailing to PSC (adv) for scanning.

## Section 2 – Action Upon Receipt Of Exams

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**Introduction** This section provides instructions to examining board members who receive service wide exams (SWEs).

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**Background** This section will discuss:

- Checking Exam Packets
- Forwarding Exams
- Advising Candidates
- Preparing Exam Rooms
- Exam Materials
- Optional Items (calculators, slide rules, etc.)

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**Checking Exam Packets** Obtain from your command, a list of candidates recommended to participate in the SWE, including those who just reported aboard and those who recently departed since Personnel Data Extract (PDE) verification. Compare these names against the shipping list received and ensure an exam was received for each candidate. Also ensure:

- If you do not receive a test for an eligible candidate, notify PSC (adv) immediately by message traffic to COGARD PSC TOPEKA KS//ADV// or by email to PSC-ADV.
- If you do not receive an exam for a candidate who recently reported, contact the previous command and ask that they forward the test.

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**Forwarding Exams**

**Items to forward:** If you receive a test for a member who has transferred to another unit, forward the below items to the new unit:

- Exam booklet
- Answer sheet(s)
- Copy of shipping list

**Preparing the shipping list:** The forwarding exam board shall annotate the shipping list to show:

- “Exam forwarded to OPFAC XX-XXXXX via DHL, FedEx, Postal Express or Registered Mail” (If forwarding a classified exam, only Registered Mail may be used). or,
- “Exam hand-carried to OPFAC XX-XXXXX”

**Packaging:** All exams forwarded to another OPFAC shall be:

- Packaged using an inner and outer cover (envelopes, wrap or cartons).
- For unclassified exams, the inner cover must be sealed and marked “SWE-FOUO”.
- For classified exams, mark the most-inner envelope with the highest classification assigned to the classified exam question, (e.g.”**Confidential**”). If unsure of classification level, contact PSC (adv) at 785-339-3400. Mark the inner envelope containing the most-inner envelope with “**Deliver Unopened To Classified Material Control Officer**”. The outer cover must be sealed and marked with the forwarding address only.

**Delivery:** The following applies:

- SWEs may be hand-delivered by an officer.
- Ship via DHL, FedEx, Postal Express or Registered Mail. DHL and FedEx require a street address vice rural deliver or PO Box Number.
- Classified SWEs can **only** be hand carried from CMCO to CMCO or via Registered mail.

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**Advising Candidates**

Immediately upon receipt of SWEs, notify all candidates, in writing of the exams received, date, time and location of their test. Use the Plan Of The Week, Electronic Bulletin Boards, Email, etc.

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**Preparing  
Exam Rooms**

The exam room should be:

- Quiet
- Comfortable (AC or Heat as appropriate)
- Well lit
- Properly ventilated

The candidates writing surface should be:

- Clean
  - Smooth
  - Large enough for booklets and answer sheets to lie flat
- 

**Exam Materials**

The exam board shall provide the following to the candidates:

- Unopened exams (provided by PSC-adv)
  - A blank answer sheet (PSC-4801) (provided by PSC-adv)
  - Two sheets of scratch paper (more sheets if required)
  - Two sharpened #2 lead pencils with erasers
  - SWE Challenge Worksheets (see encl. (1) to this guide)
  - Extra answer sheet, if needed due to damage of first one
  - For BM candidates – Rolling Plotter (Weems), Compass, Divider, Maneuvering Board (Ntl. Stock #7642 01 400 9445 NIMA Ref No. WOBZP5090). BM candidates are responsible to obtain and bring these items unless the command elects to provide them. Candidates should be notified prior to exam if required to provide their own.
- 

**Optional Items**

Members may bring these optional items to the test room:

- Calculator – Strictly for numeric calculations. It may not have the ability to store, produce or reproduce text. Indicators of these type of calculators are keys labeled “QWERTY” or “ALPHA”
  - Nautical Slide Rulers – may be used if needed
  - For BM and OS candidates – Rolling Plotter, Compass, Divider, Maneuvering Board
- 

**Prohibited  
Items**

Members may not bring these items into the test room:

- Electronic devices of any kind (except calculators described above) – this includes pocket organizers, PDAs, handheld or laptop computers, electronic writing pads, pen-input devices, etc.
- Digital or other types of photographic devices
- Watches or timers that emit sound – if a watch/timer does emit sound, but the sound can be turned off, it may be used as long as the sound *is* turned off
- Mobile phones, pagers, walkie-talkies, etc.

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## Section 3 – Action During Examination

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**Introduction** This section provides guidance for exam units during administration of service wide exams.

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**Procedures** The below procedures will guide the SWE Officer through:

- Seating of candidates
- Assistance during examination
- Discrepancies in examinations
- Leaving during examinations
- Substitute examinations

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**Seating Of Candidates** Follow these seating instructions.

<b>Step</b>	<b>Action</b>
1	Muster candidates and check military ID cards to ensure member is not taking a test for someone else.
2	Seat candidates according to Test Officer preplanned arrangement. Ensure that members taking the same test cannot see each other's answer sheets. Also keep in mind that the E-PME section is the same across ratings for the same pay grade.
3	Exam Board members and proctors shall be alert to the progress of exams and forbid any type of communication between candidates during the exam.
4	One Exam Board member shall remain in the room at all times.
5	Proctors for E-8 and E-9 exams shall be officers or civilians. A senior petty officer or CPO may proctor if their grade is senior to those being examined.
6	There must be a ratio of not less than one exam board member for each 25 candidates.

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**Assistance  
During  
Examination**

- Exam Board members may explain the meaning of instructions to candidates, but shall NOT interpret questions, discuss exam topics, or assist in solving any problem or question.
- Exam Board members may not discuss specific questions or answers they may have seen following the exam.
- Exam Board members must watch for and report any collusion among candidates.
- Exams may NOT be administered orally unless specifically authorized by PSC(adv) prior to the exam.

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**Verbatim  
Instructions to  
Candidates**

When all candidates are seated and the exam materials have been distributed, the exam board shall read aloud the “Verbatim Instructions To Candidates” found in Section 4 of this booklet without deviation from the wording.

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**Discrepancies  
in  
Examinations**

After reading the verbatim instructions and before the exam begins, candidates will be instructed to check their exam booklet for discrepancies. Follow the below steps for discrepancies listed:

<b>Step</b>	<b>Action</b>
1	<b>No Exam Booklet:</b> If a booklet is not available for a candidate, excuse them and follow the procedures for requesting a substitute exam as discussed in the references.
2	<b>Wrong Exam Booklet:</b> If the exam booklet with the members name sticker attached is for the wrong rating or pay grade and the correct booklet is not immediately available, the candidate will be excused and a substitute exam will be requested following the instructions discussed in the references. If an unused exam of the correct rating/grade is available due to another candidate not testing, it may be used. Notify PSC-ADV of the discrepancy immediately following the exam.

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3	<p><b>Missing Pages:</b> If the exam booklet is missing pages or has unreadable questions due to poor print quality or damage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have the candidate continue to complete the test skipping the missing or unreadable questions. Explain to the member that the unanswered questions will be prorated.</li><li>• Prorated means that the member gets the same percentage of items correct on the missing items as s/he answered correctly on the rest of the items in that section. For example, if there are 30 questions in the section and five questions are not readable or missing, the percentage of questions answered correctly for the 25 is given to the 5 unanswered questions.</li><li>• If the number of missing or unreadable questions is greater than 50% of a section, prorating will be based on the number of correct items for the entire exam. Do not destroy the exam with the missing pages, but return it to PSC (adv) with a memo explaining the discrepancy.</li></ul>
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**Leaving During Examinations**

- Candidates may not leave the exam room prior to completing their exam except for emergencies and only if accompanied by an exam board member or escort designated by examiner as per PERSMAN 5.D.8.d.
  - An exam board member shall assume possession of all exam materials during a candidate's absence.
  - Any candidate who leaves without permission will be disqualified.
-

**Arriving Late  
for the Exam**

- There is currently no official policy which prevents a member from being allowed to start a SWE after the locally scheduled exam time. The policy only states that the test be administered in the “a.m.” or “p.m.” as announced in the SWE Message for each cycle.
- It is suggested that the decision lie with the unit CO or XO on a case-by-case basis, and that favorable consideration be given for what’s considered a valid reason for arriving late. If approved, the SWE Officer must allow the late start and the normal 3 ½ hours to complete the exam.
- It is also suggested that no member be allowed to begin an exam more than one hour after the normal start time to reduce the possibility of the member discussing the exam with those who have already finished.
- The alternatives to starting late is denying the member an opportunity to compete or requesting a substitute exam. However, substitute exams are normally approved only for operational or emergency situations which prevented completion of the scheduled exam. Therefore, a late start should be given careful consideration before denying the member late entrance to the exam room.

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**Substitute  
Examinations**

To request a substitute exam, follow the procedures outlined in references (b) and (c).

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## Section 4 – Verbatim Instructions to Candidates

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**Introduction** This chapter provides verbatim instructions to the candidates to be read prior to administration of service wide exams.

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**Procedures** Read aloud the instructions printed below to all candidates prior to their exam.

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**Verbatim Instructions** With the exception of authorized calculators, if anyone has any electronic devices of any kind, please silence them and bring them to me. I will hold them until you have completed the exam.

You should have in front of you:

- An exam sealed in a plastic bag
- An answer sheet
- Two lead pencils
- Scratch paper
- A SWE Challenge Question Worksheet
- And possibly a hand-held calculator incapable of performing, reproducing or storing any text.
- You may also have a nautical slide rule if needed.

In addition to these items, BM and OS Candidates may also have:

- Rolling or Weems plotter
- Parallel Ruler
- Compass
- Divider
- Maneuvering boards

Compare the information on the exam label with that in the upper right corner of your test book cover to ensure the exam ID number is the same in both places. If you find any differences, or if the exam is for the wrong rate, please raise your hand.

*Note: if a discrepancy exists, refer to section 3, “Discrepancies in Exams”.*

Open the package at the seal and remove the booklet.

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**Verbatim  
Instructions  
(cont.)**

Be sure to follow these instructions as I read them to you:

- Do not bend, fold, or tear your answer sheet. If you do, the extremely sensitive optical scanner which scores it may not be able to score your exam.
- Any unnecessary marks that appear on the answer sheet may also cause the scanner to score your answers incorrectly.
- In the upper left section of the answer sheet, write your:
  - Last Name and Initials
  - Current Rate (e.g., DC3, AMTCS...)
  - Exam Title (e.g., DC2, AMTCM...)
  - Exam Board OPFAC. For most of you this is the 7-digit number at the bottom of the exam sticker label on the exams plastic cover.
  - Anyone who had their exam forwarded to this unit for administration should enter their permanent Exam Board OPFAC. If you don't know your Exam Board OPFAC let me know and I'll assist you.
- In the upper right corner write your SSN in the blocks. Do not fill in the bubbles.
- Look at the upper right corner of your exam booklet. To the left of the black rectangle are five digits. Write those digits on your answer sheet to the left of the pre-printed zero under "Exam Identification No."
- To the right of the black rectangle are four digits. Write the last three digits on your answer sheet to the right of the pre-printed zero under "Exam Identification No."
- The SSN and Exam ID Numbers absolutely must be correct for the optical scanner to score your test. Please verify you have them correct and let me know if you have a question.
- Now fill in the bubbles in the SSN and the Exam Identification No. sections. Please make sure the bubbles you darken match the numbers you wrote in the SSN and Exam Identification No. boxes. Notice that the top bubbles are a zero, not a one.
- When you darken bubbles you should **not** be able to read the preprinted numbers through your pencil mark. Your pencil mark should be dark enough to block them out.
- You will not be permitted to leave prior to completing your exam except to use the rest room or for emergency reasons, and then only if accompanied by an escort designated by the examiner. An exam board member will hold all exam materials during your absence. Anyone leaving without permission will be disqualified.

**Verbatim  
Instructions  
(cont.)**

- Any evidence of misconduct during the exam will also cause your disqualification.
- If anything in your exam book is unreadable or missing, raise your hand for assistance.
- Exam board members and proctors may only explain the meaning of instructions to you; they may not interpret questions, discuss exam topics, or assist in solving any problem or question.
- When you have finished, take your exam booklet, answer sheet, any challenged question sheets, scratch paper, pencils and plastic bag to an exam board member.
- This exam tests your knowledge of your rate and general military facts. Each item on the exam should be answered with the response that is correct on the job today. If there is a difference between your training materials and official procedures, select the answer that agrees with official procedures. If official procedures lead to an answer, which you feel, is not given, mark the answer which is closest to being correct.
- If you feel a question is incorrect and wish to challenge it, complete the worksheet provided. Each question challenged requires a separate worksheet. Raise your hand if you need additional worksheets.
- These exams contain 150 questions. You should answer all questions in sequence so that you do not get your answers mixed on the answer sheet. If you do skip items, be careful to mark your answers in the right place. If you make an error, be sure to erase it thoroughly. Answer all questions, even if you are unsure of the correct answer. No penalties are incurred for guessing.
- Are there any questions about the instructions you have been given?

*Note: After all questions have been answered, note the time and say:*

- Open your exam booklet and begin. You will have three and one-half hours to complete your exam. Good luck!

*Note: At the end of three and one-half hours, say:*

- Stop. Lay down your pencils and close your exam booklet. Do not get up and leave until an exam board member has picked up all your exam materials and verified that your answer sheet has been properly completed.

*Note: As exam materials are collected, check the Identifying Data at the top of the answer sheet to ensure Name, SSN and Test Id are properly filled out.*

## Section 5 – Action after Examination

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**Introduction** This chapter provides guidance for exam units after administration of service wide exams.

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**Procedures** The below procedures will guide the SWE Officer through:

- Collecting exam materials following test
- Preparing exam materials for return to PSC (adv)
- Destroying exam booklets

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**Collect Exam Materials Following Test** Follow the below steps following the exam:

Step	Action
1	<p><b>Exam Materials:</b> Collect from each candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exam booklet</li> <li>• Answer sheet</li> <li>• All scratch papers</li> <li>• Challenge questions worksheets</li> <li>• Exam plastic bag</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>ID Blocks:</b> Verification of the top three blocks is critical to a test being properly scanned. Any exam (including RNA's) which do not have all ovals darkened in this section will not scan and score without manual intervention, which causes delays. Ensure all Exam ID data is filled in on form including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name Block</li> <li>• SSN</li> <li>• Exam ID</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Test Answers:</b> Check the answer sheet for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only one answer darkened for each question</li> <li>• Ovals are dark enough that you cannot read the letter printed in the oval through the pencil mark (too light)</li> <li>• Clean erasures of changed answers</li> <li>• No unnecessary marks on the answer sheet</li> </ul>

4	<b>Returned Not Administered</b> exams (RNA's) must have the top three blocks completed by the Exam Board member and ovals darkened. These answer sheets will be scanned along with administered exams to close out the Direct Access record and let the system know that the exam was RNA. Failure to complete and return the RNA answer sheets will cause delays in the system and unnecessary manual intervention by PSC (adv).
5	If a substitute exam is authorized for a member who missed the scheduled test date, and a new test booklet is sent, destroy the first booklet sent. No RNA answer sheet is required for the first test when a substitute test is administered. Return only the substitute exam answer sheet.

**Preparing  
Exam Materials  
for Return to  
PSC(adv)**

Follow the below guidelines when returning test materials to PSC(adv).

Step	Action
1	<p><b>Answer Sheets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If an exam was received from another unit to administer to their member at your command, write <b>their</b> unit OPFAC on the top left of the answer sheet where it says "Exam Board OPFAC".</li> <li>• Do not staple, paper clip, fold, bend or wrinkle answer sheets.</li> <li>• Return all answer sheets at the same time.</li> <li>• Place answer sheets in a protective folder or box to prevent damage during shipping.</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Shipping Lists:</b></p> <p>Annotate the shipping list to show the disposition of each exam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADMIN (administered)</li> <li>• RNA (returned not administered)</li> <li>• FWD TO OPFAC ##### (forwarded to another unit)</li> <li>• RCVD FM OPFAC #####(For exams received from other units, write in all identifying data on the shipping list for the exam)</li> <li>• Sign the shipping list as verification of data.</li> <li>• Print your name and phone number below your signature.</li> </ul>



3	<p><b>Inner Envelope:</b> Place the following items in an inner envelope in order (shown from top to bottom):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annotated, signed Shipping List(s)</li> <li>• Protective folder containing the Administered and completed RNA answer sheets in shipping list order</li> <li>• Completed SWE Challenge Questions Worksheets</li> <li>• Unused Answer Sheets</li> <li>• Mark the inner envelope with notification that it contains testing materials and FOUO”.</li> <li>• Answer sheets from classified exams should be placed in a separate protective folder and placed in the same envelope with the other answer sheets along with the annotated, signed shipping lists. No special markings are required, as answer sheets are not classified.</li> <li>• Only exam books containing classified questions are classified and should not be returned unless the booklet is missing pages or has unreadable questions as discussed on page 3-3. If so, mark most-inner envelope with the highest classification assigned to a classified exam question, (e.g.”<b>Confidential</b>”). If unsure of the classification, contact PSC (adv) at 785-339-3400. Then mark the inner envelope containing the most-inner envelope with “<b>Deliver Unopened to Classified Material Control Officer</b>”. The outer envelope should have only the address listed in step 4 below.</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Do not return scratch paper, plastic bags or exam booklets (except for those with errors as noted in section 3).</i></p>
4	<p><b>Outer Envelope:</b> Place the sealed inner envelope into an outer envelope or box and address to:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Commanding Officer (ADV) Coast Guard Personnel Service Center 444 SE Quincy St. Topeka, KS 66683-3591</b></p> <p>Return SWE materials within 3 days of the exam date. Send via DHL, FedEx, Postal Express or Registered Mail. <b>DO NOT USE REGULAR OR CERTIFIED MAIL.</b> All shipments must have a tracking number maintained by the shipping unit so that packages may be traced in the event they are lost in shipment.</p>

**Destroying  
Exam Booklets,  
Scratch Paper  
and Exam  
Labels**

The Exam Board Officer shall destroy all used and unused SWE booklets as soon as possible but not later than 10 days following the exam. Local shredding is the preferred method. If an exam booklet contains classified information as indicated on the booklet cover, it's to be destroyed in accordance with the Classified Information Management Program, COMSTINST M5510.23 (series). Used scratch paper handed in by the examinees will also be destroyed as shall the exam labels containing SSN's, affixed to the exams plastic wrapping.

## SWE CHALLENGE QUESTION WORKSHEET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Exam Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Exam Board OPFAC: \_\_\_\_\_ Exam ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Question Number Being Challenged: \_\_\_\_\_ Found On Page: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Question (check one) Rating \_\_\_\_\_ E-PME \_\_\_\_\_

Which Answer Did You Choose? \_\_\_\_\_

**Explain the discrepancy, as you see it, in the space below. (Do not copy or paraphrase the question, nor discuss any classified information from this test. This form is unclassified)**

Unit Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Email: \_\_\_\_\_