



COMDTINST 16672.5A
November 17, 2006

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 16672.5A

Subj: COAST GUARD DECK WATCH OFFICER EXAMINATION PROGRAM

Ref: (a) Navigation Rules, International-Inland, COMDTINST M16672.2 (series)

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction establishes the Coast Guard's Deck Watch Officer (DWO) examination program, and minimum qualification requirements.
2. ACTION. Area and district commanders; commanders of maintenance and logistics commands; commanding officers of headquarters units; and assistant commandants for directorates, Judge Advocate General, special staff offices at Headquarters and sector/group commanders, shall ensure that this Instruction is distributed to the widest extent possible, and that all personnel comply with its provisions. Internet release authorized.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. The Coast Guard Deck Watch Officer Examination Program, COMDTINST 16672.5 of 28 January 1999 is cancelled.
4. DISCUSSION. Controlling the safe movement of a Coast Guard vessel as Officer of the Deck (OOD) is a challenging and highly demanding duty. Assuming such an important responsibility represents unconditional trust by the Coast Guard that our personnel and resources will be safeguarded to a person's absolute best ability. The intent of this examination program is to verify Officers of the Deck (OOD) knowledge of reference (a).
5. DEFINITIONS. For the purposes of this Instruction, the following definitions apply:
 - a. Deck Watch Officer (DWO) Exam. The Coast Guard Institute administered test which is required for all personnel performing underway OOD duties. It is similar in content to the merchant marine licensing examinations distributed by the National Maritime

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	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
A	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1		1		1					
B		10	10		10	2	1	1		5			1	10	1	1		10				1			1	
C									1		2			2		1			1				1		1	1
D	1			1				1	1*				1									1				
E					1				1										1							
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NON-STANDARD DISTRIBUTION: *DI (Only the following units) CGLO ATG Mayport, CGLO ATGLANT Norfolk, CGLO ATGMIDPAC Pearl Harbor, CGLO ATGPAC San Diego, CGLO N013 ATGPACNORWEST.

Center and covers both the 1972 COLREGS and the Inland Navigation Rules. There are two versions of this examination, the initial and the renewal.

- (1) Initial DWO Exam (DWINTO) (Closed Book). Required for those members who have not previously passed the DWO Exam, or have exceeded a period of five-years since the date of their last examination.
 - (2) Renewal DWO Exam (DWINTR) (Open Book). Administered to members who have previously passed an Initial Exam or a Renewal Exam within the last five years. This five-year period of eligibility commences on the date of their last examination. This test is proctored open book, permitting the candidate to use a new, corrected-to-date, but otherwise unmarked copy of reference (a).
- b. Inland DWO Exam. Previously administered by the Institute to those personnel assigned to inland tenders operating on the Western Rivers and now obsolete. All Coast Guard members must pass the DWO Exam discussed in paragraph 5.a of this Instruction (International and Inland Rules of the Road) to meet requirements.
 - c. Merchant Marine Rules of the Road Examinations. There are a number of examination modules which are taken in conjunction with a maritime license application, but only one may be used to earn Coast Guard DWO examination credit. The **Rules of the Road** examination module for International + Inland-Upper Level Licenses, **Module Number 054XX (the last two may be any number) is the only authorized substitute for the DWINTO**. Persons completing this exam are required to submit a copy of their test score sheet to the Institute and apply for credit. There is no merchant equivalent for the renewal DWINTR. Coast Guard members who use Module 054XX for initial qualification must take the Coast Guard Institute DWINTR exam before the five year period expires in order to meet requirements.
 - d. Coast Guard Rules of the Road Exam. The non-resident Rules of the Road course (0469) and related examination developed and maintained by the Boatswain's Mate Non-Resident Training office at Boat Forces Center specifically for boatcrew, coxswain and shipboard lookout certifications. This examination is **not** an authorized alternative to the Coast Guard DWO exam described in paragraph 5.a.
 - e. Execution of Orders. The date a member detaches PCS from duty station en route an afloat assignment involving underway OOD/ship control duties.
6. POLICY.
- a. Affected Personnel. Cutter Commanding Officers, Officers-in-Charge, Executive Officers, Executive Petty Officers and any Command designated underway OODs shall pass the appropriate (Initial or Renewal) DWO Exam.
 - b. Authorized Exam. The Coast Guard DWO Exam (International/Inland rules) and the Merchant Marine Rules of the Road Exam (closed book) are the only authorized examinations.

- c. Merchant Marine Licenses. Members who possess a valid Merchant Marine License are not waived from the requirements of this Instruction. After 01 January 2000, members have been required to take the Initial DWO Exam (DWINTO) if they don't meet the requirements of a renewal examination as described in paragraph 5.a (2).
- d. PCS Orders. At a minimum, the applicable examination (Initial or Renewal) must be passed no more than one year prior to the execution of PCS afloat orders. This standard applies even if the member is currently assigned to a cutter and/or possesses a valid merchant marine license. However, command cadre who have received extensions to their current afloat assignment are exempt from this requirement. **The commands of prospective CO/OIC/XO/XPOs shall ensure that the departing member complies with the policies contained within this Instruction before authorizing the member to execute PCS orders.**
- e. TAD Assignments. Members assigned TAD to a cutter must have passed an authorized examination within the prior five years to temporarily serve as an afloat CO, XO or underway OOD.
- f. Frequency. A member may take the DWO Exam at any time, even while assigned to shore duty. With the exception of those persons who have received PCS orders to an afloat CO/OIC/XO/XPO billet, there is no limit to the number of attempts a person can make to pass the examination.
 - (1) For prospective command cadre, the October-December time frame is within the one-year requirement of the typical summer PCS season, and prior to orders, the exam may be taken multiple times without repercussions. Once orders are issued, the member must pass the test within two attempts.
 - (2) Procrastination can lead to failure. Delayed exams and subsequent failures impact cutter readiness, disrupt operations, affect careers and can cause stress to members' families.
 - (3) ALCOAST 586/05 established a twenty-one (21) calendar day waiting period between taking end of course tests (EOCT). The DWO Exam falls within these requirements. Members should take this into account when planning pipeline (pre-arrival) training schedules, CO/XO reliefs and other PCS related events. A first exam failure can significantly disrupt future plans.
- g. Failure to Pass DWO Exam.
 - (1) Prospective CO/OIC/XO/XPO. Failure to pass the examination within two attempts following receipt of orders will result in the cancellation of those orders and be documented, at a minimum, via an administrative remarks entry. Suitable action for these unique cases shall be coordinated between the affected command, the Coast Guard Personnel Command, and the Office of Cutter Forces.
 - (2) Command designated OOD Billets. While failure to pass the test shall not preclude the execution of orders, the examination must be passed prior to performing duties as an underway OOD. **This requirement can not be waived.** If the member fails to pass the examination within nine months after reporting, that fact shall be documented, at a minimum, via an administrative remarks entry,

and the member will normally be transferred during the next assignment season. Suitable action for these unique cases shall be coordinated between the affected command, the Coast Guard Personnel Command, and the Office of Cutter Forces.

7. PROCEDURES.

- a. Preparation. Thorough knowledge of the rules, obtained by concentrated study of reference (a), is required to successfully pass the examination. Taking the Navigation Rules correspondence course and/or memorizing sample test questions and answers is not adequate preparation. However, a consolidated collection of all examination questions is located on the Internet at <http://www.uscg.mil/stcw/mmic-deckexquest.htm>. This web site is maintained by the National Maritime Center.
- b. Examination Ordering, Grading, and Results.
 - (1) General. The Coast Guard Institute is the central data collection point for all Coast Guard personnel taking the DWO Exam. They provide support to the field by distributing examinations and answer sheets as well as grading the examinations and reporting the results. The Coast Guard Academy and Training Center Yorktown provide on-site test administration and forward completion data to the Institute.
 - (2) Ordering Procedures.
 - (a) The individual's unit is responsible for administering the DWO Exam. The unit's Educational Services Officer (ESO), or appropriately designated alternate, shall order, administer, and return the examination for the candidate. The unit shall follow strict accountability and security measures when in possession of a DWO Exam.
 - (b) DWO Exams are ordered from the Coast Guard Institute in the same manner as normal correspondence courses. Detailed ordering procedures, including course number, are contained in Education Services Officer Procedures Volume II (List of Correspondence Courses), Institute Publication 1550.1.
 - (c) Units unable to comply with the normal ordering procedures because of operational need or short notice PCS orders occurring outside of the normal assignment season should forward their CGI-2100 test request form to the Institute via overnight mail. If overnight return is requested, the unit shall include a specific address and either a pre-paid overnight return mailer or cost accounting data to cover that cost.
 - (3) Status Inquiries. Personnel should check Direct Access to determine when they last took the examination (Home>Self Service>Employee>View> Test Results).

- (4) Exam Results. After grading an examination, the Institute forwards the results via letter to the member. The address for mailing Merchant Marine Rules of the Road examination results is:

Commanding Officer (NRT)
 U.S. Coast Guard Institute
 5900 SW 64th St., RM 235
 Oklahoma City, OK 73169-6990

c. Prospective Command Cadre (CO/XO/OIC/XPO) Procedures.

- (1) Members anticipating to be screened or in the candidate pool for an afloat command cadre position are strongly encouraged to prepare early and take the exam prior to attending the Prospective CO/XO/OIC/XPO Afloat Course (340380). The first class convening typically starts during the last week of January, each year.
 - (2) Members shall provide a copy of their DWO completion certificate or other proof of completion (if recently completed before PCO/PXO course attendance) upon arrival at the Command and Operations School. CG-37RCU, in conjunction with the Command and Operations School staff, will review class rosters and individual training records in Direct Access to confirm compliance with this Instruction.
 - (3) If members are unable to take the DWO exam prior to PCO/PXO course attendance, or failed the first attempt prior to attendance, members shall be prepared to take the DWO exam during the first week of the PCO/PXO course. The Command and Operations School stands ready to assist in scheduling and proctoring the exam.
 - (4) Based on Command and Operations School reports concerning DWO completion, CG-37RCU will follow up with individuals who need to take the exam after attendance at the PCO/PXO course.
 - (5) Members requesting a PCO/PXO course waiver shall provide a copy of or proof of DWO Exam completion before the waiver is considered.
8. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. Environmental considerations were examined in the development of this Instruction and have been determined to be not applicable.
9. FORMS/REPORTS. None.

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