



COMDTINST 16672.5C
25 April 2011

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 16672.5C

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. All Coast Guard unit commanders, commanding officers, officers-in-charge, deputy/assistant commandants, and chiefs of headquarters staff elements shall comply with the provisions of this Instruction. Internet release is authorized.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. The Coast Guard Deck Watch Officer Examination Program, COMDTINST 16672.5B of 13 January 2010 is cancelled.
4. DISCUSSION. Controlling the safe movement of a Coast Guard vessel as Officer of the Deck (OOD) or as coxswain is a challenging and highly demanding duty. Assuming such an important responsibility represents a high level of trust by the Coast Guard that our personnel and resources will be safeguarded. The intent of this examination program is to verify an Officer of the Deck's (OOD) or coxswain's knowledge and application 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 or coxswain duties. It is similar in content to the merchant marine licensing examinations distributed by the National Maritime Center (NMC) and covers both the 1972 COLREGS and the Inland

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Navigation Rules. There are two versions of the DWO 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. 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, 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 the signed letter from the National Maritime Center or Regional Exam Center attesting to their score to the Coast Guard Institute and apply for credit. There is no merchant equivalent for the 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.
 - c. Coast Guard Rules of the Road Exam. The non-resident Rules of the Road course (0469) and related examination are no longer authorized for Boatswain's Mate (BM) advancement or coxswain certification.
 - d. 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.
 - (1) Prospective cutter Commanding Officers (CO), Officers-in-Charge (OIC), Executive Officers (XO), Executive Petty Officers (XPO) shall pass the appropriate (Initial or Renewal) DWO Exam prior to executing orders. Members shall follow the procedures outlined in section 7.c. of this Instruction. 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 amongst the affected command, the Coast Guard Personnel Service Center (PSC) and the Office of Cutter Forces.

- (2) Prospective cutter Operations Officers and Operations Petty Officers shall pass the appropriate (Initial or Renewal) DWO Exam prior to executing orders. This applies only to members being assigned to specified Personnel Allowance List (PAL) positions designated as Operations Officer or Operations Petty Officer. Members assigned to these specified billets shall follow the procedures outlined in section 7.c. of this Instruction. 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 amongst the affected command, the Coast Guard Personnel Service Center (PSC) and the Office of Cutter Forces.
 - (3) Command designated underway OODs and DWOs designated in unit PALs shall pass the appropriate (Initial or Renewal) DWO Exam. 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 cannot be waived. If the member fails to pass the examination within six 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, PSC, and the Office of Cutter Forces. OODs and DWOs whose exams have lapsed shall lose their certification until they have passed the exam.
 - (4) BMs shall be current in the appropriate (Initial or Renewal) DWO Exam for advancement. BMs that have not passed the DWO exam are not eligible to advance or be placed on the supplemental or striker eligibility lists.
 - (5) All prospective coxswains, regardless of rate, shall pass the appropriate (Initial or Renewal) DWO Exam prior to certification as a coxswain. Coxswains who have exceeded a period of five-years since the date of their last examination shall lose their certification until they have passed the exam in accordance with paragraph 5.a.1. of this Instruction.
- b. Authorized Exams. 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. Members are required to take the Initial DWO Exam (DWINTO) if they do not meet the requirements of a renewal examination as described in paragraph 5.a (2).
 - d. PCS Orders. For afloat CO/OIC/XO/XPO or Operations Officer/Petty Officers, 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, personnel who have received extensions to their current afloat assignment are exempt from this requirement. Commands 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, OIC, XO, XPO, OPS Officer/PO 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 or Operations Officer/Petty Officer billet, there is no limit to the number of attempts a person can make to pass the examination.
 - (1) For prospective command cadre and designated operations personnel, 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) Commandant policy established a twenty-one (21) calendar day waiting period before retaking 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/OIC/XO/XPO and OPS Officer/PO reliefs and other PCS related events. A first exam failure can significantly disrupt future plans.

7. PROCEDURES.

- a. Preparation. Thorough knowledge of the rules, obtained by concentrated study of reference (a), is required to successfully pass the examination. A sample list of deck watch officer questions and answers is located on the Internet at: http://uscg.mil/nmc/training/2010q3_sample_deck_questions.pdf. 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. It provides 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. Course descriptions, including course numbers, will be maintained on the Coast Guard Institute's webpage under the Course Support & Testing tab. The web-site address is <http://www.uscg.mil/hr/cgi/>.
 - (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 contact the Coast Guard Institute's Course Support & Testing (CST) Division by phone at (405) 954-2437.
- (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 Coast Guard Institute forwards the results via e-mail to the member and inputs the score into Direct Access. The address for mailing Merchant Marine Rules of the Road examination results is:

COMMANDING OFFICER (CST)
 US COAST GUARD INSTITUTE
 5900 SW 64TH ST RM 235
 OKLAHOMA CITY OK 73169-6946

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

- (1) Members anticipating to be screened or in the candidate pool for an afloat command cadre or designated operations position are strongly encouraged to prepare early and take the exam prior to attending the Prospective CO/XO/OIC/XPO Afloat Course (340380) or Prospective Operations Officer (POPS) course (501080). This is especially true for those members being assigned to PATFORSWA cutters. The first class convening typically starts during the first full week of January each year.
- (2) Members shall provide a copy of their DWO completion certificate, Direct Access printout or other proof of completion (if recently completed before PCO/PXO or POPS course attendance) upon arrival at the Command and Operations School. The Office of Cutter Forces, Commandant (CG-751), 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 or POPS 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 or POPS 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, Commandant (CG-751) will follow up with individuals who need to take the exam after attendance at the PCO/PXO or POPS course.
 - (5) Members requesting a PCO/PXO or POPS 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.

VINCENT B. ATKINS /s/
Rear Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard
Assistant Commandant for Capability