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TO ALCOAST  
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UNCLAS //N16672//  
ALCOAST 514/11  
COMDTNOTE 16672

Subj: Coast Guard Deck Watch Officer (DWO) Examination Program

A. Coast Guard Deck Watch Officer Examination Program, COMDTINST 16672.5 (SERIES)

1. Ref A requires a prospective CO, XO, OINC, XPO, operations officer and operations petty officer of an afloat unit to pass the applicable DWO exam (initial or renewal) no more than one year prior to the execution of PCS orders. This standard applies even if the member is currently assigned to a cutter and/or possesses valid merchant licenses or credentials.
2. The following procedures are in effect:
  - a. Members in the candidate pool for an afloat command cadre or personal allowance list (PAL) designated operations officer or operations petty officer in FY12 are strongly encouraged to prepare early and take the exam ASAP preferably prior to attending the Prospective CO/XO/OIC/XPO afloat course (340380), Prospective Operations Officer course (501080) or Cutter OPS-BRM course (500686). Note: the OCT-DEC time frame is within the one-year requirement of the typical summer PCS season. Prior to orders, the test may be taken multiple times without repercussion. Once orders are issued, the member must pass the test within two attempts. Failure to pass the DWO exam within two attempts will result in the cancellation of PCS orders for the member. Commands and members shall immediately notify Commandant (CG-751) when this situation occurs.
  - B. Members shall provide proof of DWO completion (if recently completed before PCO/PXO/POPS/Cutter OPS-BRM attendance) upon arrival at the command and operations school. Commandant (CG-751), in conjunction with the command and ops school, will review class rosters and individual training records to confirm compliance with ref A.
  - C. A solid grasp of rules of the road fundamentals is essential to maximizing your experience throughout your time at these courses. Passing the exam prior to attendance demonstrates a working knowledge of the rules of the road and provides expanded opportunity to explore the practical application in seminar and simulator use. While not currently a course prerequisite, all attendees should schedule and pass the DWO exam prior to attendance. If members are unable to take the DWO exam prior to attending these courses or failed the first attempt prior to attendance, members shall be prepared to take the DWO exam during the first day of the course. The command and operations school stands ready to assist in scheduling and proctoring the exam. Contact either CDR Vinciguerra or BMCM Giffin for further information.
3. In past transfer seasons, procrastination has led to failure resulting in short-fused re-tests, delayed reporting dates and cancelled orders. Delayed tests (whether due to member or even an unexpected exam compromise and re-write) and failures ultimately impact cutter readiness and disrupt operations, while further affecting careers and members families.
4. Members are reminded of the twenty-one (21) calendar day waiting period between taking end of course tests. The DWO exam falls under these guidelines. Individuals should take this into account when planning pipeline training and other events involving PCS and CO/XO/OPS reliefs. A first exam failure can significantly disrupt the rest of your schedule.
5. Members requesting a waiver for the mandatory attendance of the PCO/PXO afloat course, the POPS course or the Cutter OPS-BRM course shall provide proof of DWO exam completion to Commandant (CG-751) before the waiver is considered.
6. It is the responsibility of all members being considered for these positions to meet all requirements.
7. DWO policy also states that commands shall ensure the departing member complies with these requirements before authorizing the execution of PCS orders.
8. Commandant (CG-751) POC is Dennis Thorseth at 202-372-2335 or [dennis.c.thorseth@uscg.mil](mailto:dennis.c.thorseth@uscg.mil).

9. RDML Vincent B. Atkins, Assistant Commandant for Capability, sends.

10. Internet release authorized.

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