



COMDTINST 16672.5E
July 15, 2016

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 16672.5E

Subj: COAST GUARD DECK WATCH OFFICER EXAMINATION PROGRAM

- Ref: (a) Navigation Rules and Regulations Handbook, August 2014 Edition
(b) FORCECOM Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), Volume 10 (Testing)
(c) Education Services Officer (ESO), Volume I, CGINST M1000.1 (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 16672.5D 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 OOD's or coxswain's knowledge and application of Reference (a).
5. DISCLAIMER. This guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a rule. It is intended to provide operational guidance for Coast Guard personnel and is not intended to nor does it impose legally-binding requirements on any party outside the Coast Guard.

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6. MAJOR CHANGES.

- a. Paragraph 10.b. has been rewritten to clarify the Coast Guard Institute's process for accepting commercial documentation for DWO (DWINTO) Examination credit.
- b. Paragraph 11.a. (1) has been rewritten to require that station and Aids to Navigation Team (ANT) Commanding Officers (CO)/Officers in Charge (OIC) pass the appropriate (Initial or Renewal) DWO Examination prior to executing orders.
- c. Paragraph 12.b. has been rewritten to direct members to the Coast Guard Institute (CGI) website for a step-by-step process guide detailing examination procedures, grading and score recording.

7. IMPACT ASSESSMENT. None.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS.

- a. The development of this Instruction and the general policies contained within it have been thoroughly reviewed by the originating office in conjunction with the Office of Environmental Management, and are categorically excluded (CE) under current USCG CE # 33 from further environmental analysis, in accordance with Section 2.B.2 and Figure 2-1 of the National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures and Policy for Considering Environmental Impacts, COMDTINST M16475.1 (series).
- b. This directive will not have any of the following: significant cumulative impacts on the human environment; substantial controversy or substantial change to existing environmental conditions; or inconsistencies with any Federal, State, or local laws or administrative determinations relating to the environment. All future specific actions resulting from the general policies in this Instruction must be individually evaluated for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), DHS and Coast Guard NEPA policy, and compliance with all other environmental mandates.

9. DISTRIBUTION. Paper distribution will be made of this Instruction. An electronic version will be located on the following Commandant (CG-612) web sites:

Internet: <https://www.uscg.mil/directives/> , and CG Portal:
<https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/library/directives/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

10. DEFINITIONS. For the purposes of this Instruction, the following definitions apply:

- a. Deck Watch Officer (DWO) Examination. The Coast Guard Institute (CGI) administered test is required for all personnel performing underway OOD or coxswain duties. It is similar in content to the merchant marine credentialing examination modules distributed by the National Maritime Center (NMC) and covers both the 1972 COLREGS and the Inland Navigation Rules. There are two versions of the DWO examination, the initial and the renewal.

- (1) Initial DWO Examination (DWINTO) (Closed Book). DWINTO is required for members who have not previously passed the DWO Examination or have exceeded a period of five years since the date of their last successful examination. Completion code is 000701.
 - (2) Renewal DWO Examination (DWINTR) (Open Book). DWINTR is administered to members who have previously passed an Initial Examination or a Renewal Examination within the last five years. This five year period of eligibility commences on the date of their last successful examination. Completion code is 000702.
 - (a) It is not the intent of this Instruction to penalize members for taking the examination on a regular basis (i.e., annually) in order to “restart” the five year period. If a member fails an interim attempt, the original successful completion date remains in effect until the five year period is exceeded. Then, Section 10.a. (1) of this Instruction applies.
 - (b) An examination failure does not necessarily require a decertification of an OOD or coxswain qualification unless the Commanding Officer/Officer-in-Charge (CO/OIC) has lost faith in the member’s overall ability.
 - (c) 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 Mariner Credentialing Rules of the Road Examinations. There are several Rules of the Road examination modules which are taken in conjunction with an application for a merchant mariner credential, but only one may be used to earn Coast Guard DWO examination credit.
- (1) The Rules of the Road examination module for International + Inland, Module Number Q100 is the only authorized substitute for the DWINTO. There is no substitute for the DWINTR exam.
 - (2) Persons who have successfully completed this examination module at a Coast Guard Regional Exam Center (REC) should request a memo indicating completion. A member should submit this documentation to CGI via the member’s Education Services Officer (ESO) to apply for credit.
 - (3) Members who have taken a commercial course approved by NMC equivalent to the Q100 exam are required to submit a copy of a signed certificate from an NMC approved course provider to CGI via the member's ESO. A current list of approved courses may be found on the NMC website: <https://www.uscg.mil/nmc/>. Click on "Approved Courses," then "Search by Courses," then "Rules of the Road (USCG Deck Watch Officer)." Only courses that are listed on the Approved Courses page meet the Coast Guard requirement for DWO.

- (4) A new completion code has been created for the DWO commercial equivalency. CG Institute will use code 000706 (DWO INTERNATIONAL/INLAND-COMMERCIAL SOURCE (DWCOMM)) to document a member's completion of the DWO Exam equivalent via a commercial provider or REC when entering in Direct Access.
 - (5) A member who has successfully completed a DWINTO or DWINTR DWO examination may not be credited for that when applying for a Merchant Mariner Credential. There is no credentialing equivalent for either CG DWO exam.
 - (6) Coast Guard members who use module Q100 from either an REC or commercial provider for initial qualification must take the Coast Guard Institute DWINTR examination before the five year period expires in order to meet requirements.
- c. Coast Guard Rules of the Road Examination. The non-resident Rules of the Road course (0469) and related examination are not authorized for Boatswain's Mate (BM) advancement or coxswain certification.
 - d. Execution of Orders. The date a member detaches PCS from a duty station en route to an afloat assignment involving underway OOD/ship control duties.

11. POLICY.

- a. Affected Personnel.
 - (1) Prospective cutter, station, or ANT Commanding Officers (CO), Officers-in-Charge (OIC), Executive Officers (XO) and Executive Petty Officers (XPO) shall pass the appropriate (Initial or Renewal) DWO Examination prior to executing orders. Members shall follow the procedures outlined in section 12.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 documentation, 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), the Office of Cutter Forces (CG-751) or the Office of Boat Forces (CG-731).
 - (2) Prospective cutter Operations Officers and Operations Petty Officers shall pass the appropriate (Initial or Renewal) DWO Examination prior to executing orders. This applies only to members 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 12.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 documentation, at a minimum, via an administrative remarks entry. Suitable action for these unique cases shall be coordinated amongst the affected command PSC, and the Office of Cutter Forces (CG-751).

- (3) Cutter command designated underway OODs and DWOs designated in unit PALs shall pass the appropriate (Initial or Renewal) DWO Examination. 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 amongst the affected command, PSC, and the Office of Cutter Forces (CG-751). OODs and DWOs whose examinations have lapsed shall lose their certification until they have passed the examination.
 - (4) BMs shall be current in the appropriate (Initial or Renewal) DWO Examination for advancement. BMs that have not passed the DWO examination 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 Examination 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 examination in accordance with Paragraph 10.a.(1) of this Instruction.
- b. Authorized Examinations. The Coast Guard DWO Examination (International/Inland Rules) and the Merchant Mariner Credentialing Rules of the Road module Q100 (closed book) are the only authorized examinations.
 - c. Merchant Mariner Credentials. Members who possess a valid Merchant Mariner Credential are not waived from the requirements of this Instruction. Members are required to take the Initial DWO Examination (DWINTO) if they do not meet the requirements of a renewal examination as described in Paragraph 10.a.(2).
 - d. PCS Orders. For afloat CO/OIC/XO/XPO or Operations Officer/Petty Officer, 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, Operations Officer/Petty Officer or underway OOD.

- f. Frequency. A member may take the DWO Examination 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 is allowed to pass the examination.
- (1) For prospective cutter, station, or ANT command cadre and designated cutter operations personnel, the October-December time frame is within the one-year requirement of the typical summer PCS season. Prior to receiving orders, a member may take the DWO examination multiple times without repercussions. Once orders are issued, the member must pass the test within two attempts.
 - (2) Procrastination can lead to failure. Delayed examinations and subsequent failures impact cutter readiness, disrupt operations, affect careers and can cause stress to members' families.
 - (3) References (b) and (c) establish a twenty-one (21) calendar day waiting period before retaking end of course tests (EOCT). The DWO Examination falls within these requirements. Members should take this into account when planning pipeline (pre-arrival) training schedules, CO/OIC/XO/XPO or Operations Officer/Petty Officer reliefs and other PCS related events. A first examination failure can significantly disrupt future plans.

12. PROCEDURES.

- a. Preparation. Thorough knowledge of the rules, obtained by concentrated study of Reference (a), is required to successfully pass the examination. Information on the Rules of the Road examination modules administered for Merchant Mariner credentialing is available on the NMC website at: <https://www.uscg.mil/nmc/training/exams/default.asp>. Click on "Regulations Effective As of March 24, 2014" to view the appropriate information.
- b. Examination Procedures, Grading and Recording. Members desiring or required to take the Coast Guard DWINTO or DWINTR examination should contact their local ESO for guidance. A step-by-step process guide detailing examination procedures, grading and score recording is available on the CG Institute website located at: https://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/cgi/eso/essentials/ESO_MBR_GUIDE_QUALIFICATION_COURSE_EXAMS%20v2%2017Jun16.pdf
- c. Prospective Command Cadre and Operations Officer/Petty Officers 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 DWO examination 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 assigned to PATFORSWA cutters.
 - (2) Prior to the convening of a PCO/PXO or POPS class, the Command and Operations School staff will review student qualifications in Direct Access and

determine which members need to take the DWO examination. If members were unable to take the DWO examination prior to the PCO/PXO or POPS class, or failed the first attempt prior to attendance, members shall be prepared to take the DWO examination during the first week of the PCO/PXO or POPS class. The Command and Operations School stands ready to assist in scheduling the examination.

- (3) Based on Command and Operations School reports concerning DWO completion, Commandant (CG-751) will follow up with individuals who need to take the examination after attendance at the PCO/PXO or POPS courses.
 - (4) Members requesting a PCO/PXO or POPS course waiver shall provide a copy or proof of DWO Examination completion to Commandant (CG-751) before the waiver is considered.
13. RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS. This Instruction has been thoroughly reviewed during the directives clearance process, and it has been determined there are no further records scheduling requirements, in accordance with Federal Records Act, 44 U.S.C. 3101 et seq., NARA requirements, and Information and Life Cycle Management Manual, COMDTINST M5212.12 (series). This policy does not have any significant or substantial change to existing records management requirements.
 14. FORMS/REPORTS. None.
 15. REQUEST FOR CHANGES. Change recommendations should be routed via memo through the chain of command to the Office of Cutter Forces, Commandant (CG-751).

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