USACE SMALL BOAT COURSE PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

VISIT US ONLINE FOR THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE

https://usacesmallboat.examzify.com

Copyright © 2026 by Examzify - A Kaluba Technologies Inc. product.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transferred in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, web distribution, taping, or by any information storage retrieval system, without the written permission of the author.

Notice: Examzify makes every reasonable effort to obtain accurate, complete, and timely information about this product from reliable sources.

SAMPLE

Table of Contents

Copyright 1

Table of Contents 2

Introduction 3

How to Use This Guide 4

Questions 5

Answers 8

Explanations 10

Next Steps 15

SAMPLE

Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

SAMPLE

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

SAMPLE

Questions

SAMPLE

1. Class B fire corresponds to which hazard?

A. Electrical

B. Flammable liquids

C. Combustible solids

D. Metals

2. What are beacons and examples?

A. Day boards, lighthouses, square, triangle

B. Permeable fixed

C. Float on top of water

D. Cans and spar buoys

3. For USACE vessels under 26 feet, what fire extinguisher rating is required?

A. One 2A:10BC

B. One 1A:10BC

C. One 3A:40BC

D. One 4A:60BC

4. A single prolonged blast indicates which of the following signals?

A. Underway and Making Way, Leaving a Dock

B. Restricted Visibility

C. Leaving Dock Going Astern

D. Anchored

5. What steps should you follow before launching from a ramp?

A. Check engine, put on PFDs, attach kill switch lanyard, verify gear, check the ramp conditions, and start with low throttle.

B. Skip engine check and launch at high throttle.

C. Only check PFDs.

D. Launch with ballast.

SAMPLE

6. The law requires capacity plates on boats less than how many feet in length?

A. 10 feet

B. 15 feet

C. 20 feet

D. 25 feet

7. What type of throwable device is required?

A. Type I

B. Type IV

C. Type V

D. Type III

8. What material is described as best for towlines?

A. Cotton rope

B. Double braided nylon

C. Manila rope

D. Polyester rope

9. Which of the following is listed as a navigation system type?

A. IALA

B. USATON

C. Intracoastal Waterway

D. Uniform State Waterway Marking System

10. What is the primary purpose of a PFD while underway?

A. Increase speed

B. Provide buoyancy and increase chances of survival

C. Improve visibility

D. Act as a seat cushion

SAMPLE

Answers

SAMPLE

1. B
2. A
3. B
4. C
5. A
6. C
7. B
8. B
9. A
10. B

SAMPLE

Explanations

SAMPLE

1. Class B fire corresponds to which hazard?

A. Electrical

B. Flammable liquids

C. Combustible solids

D. Metals

Fires are categorized by what is burning, and Class B specifically covers flammable liquids and their vapors. This makes it the correct choice because substances like gasoline, solvents, and oils ignite readily and can spread as vapors or on surfaces, which is the signature hazard for this class. Electrical hazards involve energized electrical equipment, different from liquids. Combustible solids such as wood or paper are Class A, and metals like magnesium or titanium are Class D. Knowing these distinctions helps you choose the right fire-extinguishing approach: for flammable liquids, use extinguishing agents rated for liquids (foam, dry chemical, CO2) and focus on removing the fuel or cooling the fuel surface, rather than relying on water.

2. What are beacons and examples?

A. Day boards, lighthouses, square, triangle

B. Permeable fixed

C. Float on top of water

D. Cans and spar buoys

Beacons are fixed navigation aids that stay in one place to mark safe water, channels, or hazards for mariners. They're designed to be recognizable both day and night. Examples include day marks, such as day boards, which are visible signs used in daylight to convey information; lighthouses, which add a light to help you navigate after dark; and the use of simple day shapes (like a square or a triangle) on the marker to communicate its purpose. Floating markers like cans and spar buoys are not beacons—they're buoys and can move with currents.

3. For USACE vessels under 26 feet, what fire extinguisher rating is required?

A. One 2A:10BC

B. One 1A:10BC

C. One 3A:40BC

D. One 4A:60BC

The key idea is the minimum fire extinguisher rating required on very small boats. The rating system shows how effective an extinguisher is against different fire types: the first part (A) addresses ordinary combustibles like wood and paper, while the BC part covers flammable liquids and electrical fires. For vessels under 26 feet, the rule calls for at least one portable extinguisher with a rating of 1A:10BC. That means it's capable of handling a small wood fire and is suitable for Class B and C fires. So the correct choice specifies that minimum rating: one extinguisher rated 1A:10BC. Higher-rated extinguishers would also meet or exceed the requirement, but the question is asking for the minimum you must have.

SAMPLE

4. A single prolonged blast indicates which of the following signals?

A. Underway and Making Way, Leaving a Dock

B. Restricted Visibility

C. Leaving Dock Going Astern

D. Anchored

In close-quarters traffic, sound signals tell others what you're about to do so they can avoid collisions. A single prolonged blast is the signal you're leaving a dock or berth. Here, you're departing the dock and backing out (going astern), so that one long blast correctly communicates your intention to others. It isn't the signal for being in restricted visibility, for being anchored, or for basic underway operation without departure from a dock, which use different sound patterns. So the single prolonged blast best matches leaving the dock, including when backing away.

5. What steps should you follow before launching from a ramp?

A. Check engine, put on PFDs, attach kill switch lanyard, verify gear, check the ramp conditions, and start with low throttle.

B. Skip engine check and launch at high throttle.

C. Only check PFDs.

D. Launch with ballast.

The main idea here is making a safety-focused, proactive pre-launch check so you're prepared, in control, and can move off the ramp smoothly. Start by confirming the engine is ready to run and gauges look normal—fuel level, oil, and ignition basics—so you're not caught with a stall or warning lights after you back onto the water. Everyone on board should be wearing a properly fitted PFD, and you should attach the kill switch lanyard to yourself so the motor will stop if you unexpectedly fall overboard. Double-check that safety gear and any items you'll need on the trip are aboard and in good condition, so you're not scrambling later. Take a moment to assess the ramp itself: is the surface dry or slick, are there rocks or debris, and is wind or current affecting your launch. Finally, begin with low throttle to ease away from the ramp, test the controls, and ensure you have space and stability before gradually increasing speed. This sequence helps prevent common launch hazards like sudden movement, loss of control, or prop injuries, and keeps you safe as you transition from ramp to open water.

6. The law requires capacity plates on boats less than how many feet in length?

A. 10 feet

B. 15 feet

C. 20 feet

D. 25 feet

Boats have a capacity plate because the difference between being loaded within the boat's buoyant limit and overloading can affect stability and safety. The plate shows the maximum weight the boat can carry and the maximum number of people it can safely carry, so you know exactly how much gear and how many passengers the vessel can handle without risking sinking or capsizing. Federal law requires these capacity plates on boats that are under 20 feet in length. This makes it easy to verify the safe load for small, more easily affected boats. On boats 20 feet or longer, the plate isn't required by law, though some boats may still have one from the manufacturer. So the length threshold is 20 feet.

SAMPLE

7. What type of throwable device is required?

A. Type I

B. Type IV

C. Type V

D. Type III

A throwable device is a non-wearable flotation aid designed to be thrown to a person in the water to provide immediate buoyancy. Type IV is the one required because it is specifically built to be tossed to someone in distress, typically a ring buoy or horseshoe buoy with a rope attached for distance and retrieval. It should be easily accessible on board (often on boats 16 feet and longer) and ready to deploy quickly. This differs from the other types, which are life jackets worn by a person to stay afloat (Type I offshore, Type II near-shore, Type III flotation aids) or special-use life jackets (Type V). Those are not the devices you throw to someone in the water, which is why Type IV is the correct choice for a throwable requirement.

8. What material is described as best for towlines?

A. Cotton rope

B. Double braided nylon

C. Manila rope

D. Polyester rope

Towlines need a rope that can handle high loads and absorb shock to protect both vessels during towing. Nylon's inherent elasticity lets the line stretch a bit under a tow load spike, damping peak forces and reducing sudden jerks. Double braided nylon especially combines strong construction with good abrasion resistance and a smooth, durable sheath, making it easier to handle and less likely to fray under heavy use. Cotton and Manila are natural fibers that absorb water, rot, and lose strength, so they don't hold up well in towing conditions. Polyester is strong and resists UV, but it has less stretch, which means less shock absorption than nylon. For these reasons, double braided nylon is the best choice for towlines.

9. Which of the following is listed as a navigation system type?

A. IALA

B. USATON

C. Intracoastal Waterway

D. Uniform State Waterway Marking System

Navigation system types are standardized schemes that define how aids to navigation are marked so mariners can interpret marks consistently. The International Association of Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) sets these standards and outlines the global buoyage frameworks used around the world. Because the question asks for a listed navigation system type, the IALA system is the best answer since it represents the official, internationally recognized framework for marking aids to navigation. The other options refer to a specific waterway, a state-level marking approach, or a general term for aids to navigation rather than a standardized system type.

SAMPLE

10. What is the primary purpose of a PFD while underway?

A. Increase speed

B. Provide buoyancy and increase chances of survival

C. Improve visibility

D. Act as a seat cushion

Keeping you afloat is the main purpose of a Personal Flotation Device when the boat is underway. A PFD provides buoyancy that keeps your body on the surface, helps keep your head above water, and reduces the effort needed to stay afloat, especially if you're tired, injured, or unconscious. This directly increases your chances of survival if you fall overboard. The fact that PFDs are bright or reflective can aid visibility for rescuers, but that's a helpful bonus, not the primary function. It isn't meant to increase speed or serve as a seat cushion.

SAMPLE

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

https://usacesmallboat.examzify.com

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

SAMPLE