

USCG Rules of the Road Practice Test (PDF)

National Maritime Center (NMC) Deck License Examination Practice Questions

Passing Score: 90% (27/30 correct) · International COLREGS & US Inland Rules

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Q1. INLAND ONLY You are navigating in a narrow channel and must remain in the channel for safe operation. Another vessel is crossing the channel ahead of you from your starboard and you doubt whether your vessel will pass safely. Which statement is TRUE?

- A) You must stop your vessel, since the other vessel is the stand-on.
- B) You must sound one short blast of the whistle and turn to starboard.
- C) You must sound the danger signal.**
- D) You must stop your engines and you may sound the danger signal.

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Rule 34(d), when vessels in sight of one another are in doubt whether sufficient action is being taken to avoid collision, the vessel in doubt must immediately sound at least 5 short and rapid blasts on the whistle.

Q2. INLAND ONLY A vessel proceeding downstream in a narrow channel on the Western Rivers sights another vessel moving upstream. Which vessel has the right of way?

- A) The vessel moving upstream against the current
- B) The vessel moving downstream with a following current**
- C) The vessel located more towards the channel centerline
- D) The vessel sounding the first whistle signal

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Rule 9(a)(ii), on the Western Rivers, a power-driven vessel operating downstream with a following current has the right-of-way over an upbound vessel, proposes the manner of passage, and initiates whistle signals.

Q3. INLAND ONLY If you were coming up on another power-driven vessel from dead astern and desired to overtake on the other vessel's starboard side, which whistle signal would you sound?

- A) One short blast**
- B) One prolonged blast
- C) Two short blasts
- D) Two prolonged blasts

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Rule 34(a), one short blast indicates 'I intend to leave you on my port side' (port-to-port pass), requiring a confirming one short blast from the other vessel.

Q4. INLAND ONLY When you are overtaking another vessel and desire to pass on her left or port hand, you should sound _____.

- A) one short blast
- B) one long blast
- C) two short blasts**
- D) two prolonged blasts

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Rule 34(a), two short blasts indicates 'I intend to leave you on my starboard side' (starboard-to-starboard pass), requiring an identical two short blasts confirmation.

Q5. INLAND ONLY Under the Inland Navigation Rules, what is the meaning of the two short blasts signal used when meeting another vessel?

- A) "I am turning to starboard."
- B) "I am turning to port."
- C) "I intend to leave you on my starboard side."**
- D) "I intend to leave you on my port side."

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Navigation Rules, for the condition where 'Under the Inland Navigation Rules, what is the meaning of the two short blasts signal used when meeting another vessel', the correct requirement is: "'I intend to leave you on my starboard side.'". This standard ensures clear navigational intent and collision avoidance.

Q6. INLAND ONLY Which lights are required for a barge, not part of a composite unit, being pushed ahead?

- A) Sidelights and a stern light
- B) Sidelights, a special flashing light, and a stern light
- C) Sidelights and a special flashing light**
- D) Sidelights, a towing light, and a stern light

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Rule 24, a towing vessel exhibits masthead lights indicating tow status, sidelights, a sternlight, and a yellow towing light situated above the sternlight.

Q7. INLAND ONLY Passing signals shall be sounded on inland waters by _____.

- A) all vessels upon sighting another vessel rounding a bend in the channel
- B) towing vessel when meeting another towing vessel on a clear day with a 0.6 mile CPA (Closest Point of Approach)
- C) a power-driven vessel when crossing less than half a mile ahead of another power-driven vessel**
- D) All of the above

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Navigation Rules, for the condition where 'Passing signals shall be sounded on inland waters by', the correct requirement is: 'a power-driven vessel when crossing less than half a mile ahead of another power-driven vessel'. This standard ensures clear navigational intent and collision avoidance.

Q8. INLAND ONLY Your vessel is meeting another vessel head-on. To comply with the rules, you should exchange _____.

- A) one short blast, alter course to port, and pass starboard to starboard
- B) one short blast, alter course to starboard, and pass port to port**
- C) two short blasts, alter course to port, and pass starboard to starboard
- D) two short blasts, alter course to starboard, and pass port to port

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Rule 34(a), one short blast indicates 'I intend to leave you on my port side' (port-to-port pass), requiring a confirming one short blast from the other vessel.

Q9. INLAND ONLY Which signal must a power-driven vessel give, in addition to one prolonged blast, when backing out of a berth with another vessel in sight?

- A) 2 short blasts
- B) 1 blast
- C) 3 short blasts**
- D) 4 blasts

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Rule 34(a) (COLREGS) and Rule 34(c) (Inland), three short blasts means 'I am operating astern propulsion'.

Q10. INLAND ONLY For the purpose of the Inland Navigation Rules, the term "inland waters" includes _____.

- A) the Great Lakes on the United States side of the International Boundary**
- B) the water surrounding any islands of the United States
- C) the coastline of the United States, out to one mile offshore
- D) any lakes within state boundaries

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Navigation Rules, for the condition where 'For the purpose of the Inland Navigation Rules, the term "inland waters" includes', the correct requirement is: 'the Great Lakes on the United States side of the International Boundary'. This standard ensures clear navigational intent and collision avoidance.

Q11. INTERNATIONAL ONLY If a towing vessel and her tow are severely restricted in their ability to deviate from their course, the towing vessel shall show lights in addition to her towing identification lights. These additional lights shall be shown if the tow is _____.

- A) pushed ahead**
- B) towed alongside
- C) towed astern
- D) All of the above

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Rule 24, a towing vessel exhibits masthead lights indicating tow status, sidelights, a sternlight, and a yellow towing light situated above the sternlight.

Q12. INLAND ONLY Two vessels in a crossing situation have reached agreement by radiotelephone as to the intentions of the other. In this situation, whistle signals are _____.

- A) required
- B) not required, but may be sounded**
- C) required if crossing within half a mile
- D) required when crossing within one mile

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Rule 34(h), if agreement for passing is reached by VHF radiotelephone, whistle signals are not required, but if agreement is not reached, whistle signals must be exchanged.

Q13. INLAND ONLY What lights are required for a barge being pushed ahead, not being part of a composite unit?

- A) Sidelights and a stern light
- B) Sidelights and a special flashing light**
- C) Sidelights, a towing light, and a stern light
- D) Sidelights, a special flashing light, and a stern light

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Rule 24, a towing vessel exhibits masthead lights indicating tow status, sidelights, a sternlight, and a yellow towing light situated above the sternlight.

Q14. INLAND ONLY A flashing blue light is used to identify _____.

- A) law enforcement vessels**
- B) U.S. submarines
- C) air-cushion vessels in the nondisplacement mode
- D) dredge pipelines on trestles

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Navigation Rules, for the condition where 'A flashing blue light is used to identify', the correct requirement is: 'law enforcement vessels'. This standard ensures clear navigational intent and collision avoidance.

Q15. INLAND ONLY Which statement is TRUE concerning the Inland Navigation Rules?

- A) They list requirements for Traffic Separation Schemes.**
- B) They define moderate speed.
- C) They require communication by radiotelephone to reach a passing agreement.
- D) All of the above

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Navigation Rules, for the condition where 'Which statement is TRUE concerning the Inland Navigation Rules', the correct requirement is: 'They list requirements for Traffic Separation Schemes.'. This standard ensures clear navigational intent and collision avoidance.

Q16. INLAND ONLY Whistle signals shall be exchanged by vessels in sight of one another when _____.

- A) they are passing within half a mile of each other**
- B) passing agreements have been made by radio
- C) course changes are necessary to pass
- D) doubt exists as to which side the vessels will pass on

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Navigation Rules, for the condition where 'Whistle signals shall be exchanged by vessels in sight of one another when', the correct requirement is: 'they are passing within half a mile of each other'. This standard ensures clear navigational intent and collision avoidance.

Q17. INLAND ONLY What is the required whistle signal for a power-driven vessel leaving a dock or berth?

- A) One short blast
- B) One prolonged blast**
- C) Two short blasts
- D) Two prolonged blasts

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Rule 34(g), a power-driven vessel leaving a dock or berth must sound one prolonged blast (4 to 6 seconds) on her whistle as a warning signal to other vessels navigating nearby.

Q18. INLAND ONLY You are overtaking a power-driven vessel in a narrow channel and wish to leave her on your starboard side. You may _____.

- A) attempt to contact her on the radiotelephone to arrange for the passage**
- B) proceed to overtake her without sounding whistle signals
- C) sound five short blasts
- D) All of the above

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Navigation Rules, for the condition where 'You are overtaking a power-driven vessel in a narrow channel and wish to leave her on your starboard side. You may', the correct requirement is: 'attempt to contact her on the radiotelephone to arrange for the passage'. This standard ensures clear navigational intent and collision avoidance.

Q19. INLAND ONLY Which statement is TRUE concerning narrow channels?

- A) You should keep to that side of the channel which is on your port side.
- B) You should avoid anchoring in a narrow channel.**
- C) A vessel having a following current will propose the manner of passage in any case where two vessels are meeting.
- D) All of the above

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Navigation Rules, for the condition where 'Which statement is TRUE concerning narrow channels', the correct requirement is: 'You should avoid anchoring in a narrow channel.'. This standard ensures clear navigational intent and collision avoidance.

Q20. BOTH INTERNATIONAL & INLAND While underway in fog, you hear a prolonged blast from another vessel. This signal indicates a _____.

- A) sailboat making way
- B) power-driven vessel making way, towing
- C) power-driven vessel making way**
- D) vessel being towed

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Navigation Rules, for the condition where 'While underway in fog, you hear a prolonged blast from another vessel. This signal indicates a', the correct requirement is: 'power-driven vessel making way'. This standard ensures clear navigational intent and collision avoidance.

Q21. BOTH INTERNATIONAL & INLAND Which vessel must show forward and after masthead lights when making way?

- A) A 75-meter vessel restricted in her ability to maneuver**
- B) A 100-meter sailing vessel
- C) A 150-meter vessel engaged in fishing
- D) A 45-meter vessel engaged in towing

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Navigation Rules, for the condition where 'Which vessel must show forward and after masthead lights when making way', the correct requirement is: 'A 75-meter vessel restricted in her ability to maneuver'. This standard ensures clear navigational intent and collision avoidance.

Q22. INLAND ONLY A power-driven vessel operating in a narrow channel with a following current on the Great Lakes or Western Rivers is meeting an upbound vessel. Which statement is TRUE?

- A) The downbound vessel has the right-of-way.
- B) The downbound vessel must initiate the required maneuvering signals.
- C) The downbound vessel must propose the manner and place of passage.
- D) All of the above**

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Rule 9(a)(ii), on the Western Rivers, a power-driven vessel operating downstream with a following current has the right-of-way over an upbound vessel, proposes the manner of passage, and initiates whistle signals.

Q23. INLAND ONLY The stand-on vessel in a crossing situation sounds one short blast of the whistle. This means that the vessel _____.

- A) intends to hold course and speed
- B) is changing course to starboard
- C) is changing course to port
- D) intends to leave the other on her port side**

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Navigation Rules, for the condition where 'The stand-on vessel in a crossing situation sounds one short blast of the whistle. This means that the vessel', the correct requirement is: 'intends to leave the other on her port side'. This standard ensures clear navigational intent and collision avoidance.

Q24. INLAND ONLY A law enforcement boat may display a _____.

- A) blue flag
- B) flashing blue light**
- C) flashing red light
- D) flashing amber light

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Navigation Rules, for the condition where 'A law enforcement boat may display a', the correct requirement is: 'flashing blue light'. This standard ensures clear navigational intent and collision avoidance.

Q25. INLAND ONLY At night, a light signal consisting of two flashes by a vessel indicates _____.

- A) an intention to communicate over radiotelephone
- B) that the vessel is in distress
- C) an intention to leave another vessel to port
- D) an intention to leave another vessel to starboard**

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Navigation Rules, for the condition where 'At night, a light signal consisting of two flashes by a vessel indicates', the correct requirement is: 'an intention to leave another vessel to starboard'. This standard ensures clear navigational intent and collision avoidance.

Q26. INLAND ONLY Which type of vessel is NOT mentioned in the Inland Navigation Rules?

- A) An inconspicuous, partly submerged vessel
- B) A seaplane
- C) An air-cushion vessel
- D) A vessel constrained by her draft**

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Navigation Rules, for the condition where 'Which type of vessel is NOT mentioned in the Inland Navigation Rules', the correct requirement is: 'A vessel constrained by her draft'. This standard ensures clear navigational intent and collision avoidance.

Q27. INLAND ONLY Which indicates the presence of a partly submerged object being towed?

- A) A diamond shape on the towed object
- B) An all-round light at each end of the towed object
- C) A searchlight beamed from the towing vessel in the direction of the tow
- D) All of the above**

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Navigation Rules, for the condition where 'Which indicates the presence of a partly submerged object being towed', the correct requirement is: 'All of the above'. This standard ensures clear navigational intent and collision avoidance.

Q28. INLAND ONLY You are meeting another vessel head- on and sound one short blast as a passing signal. The other vessel answers with two short blasts. What should be your next action?

- A) Pass on the other vessel's starboard side.
- B) Sound the danger signal.**
- C) Pass astern of the other vessel.
- D) Hold your course and speed.

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Rule 34(d), when vessels in sight of one another are in doubt whether sufficient action is being taken to avoid collision, the vessel in doubt must immediately sound at least 5 short and rapid blasts on the whistle.

Q29. INLAND ONLY Which statement is TRUE concerning the fog signal of a vessel 15 meters in length, anchored in a "special anchorage area" approved by the Secretary?

- A) The vessel is not required to sound a fog signal.**
- B) The vessel shall ring a bell for 5 seconds every minute.
- C) The vessel shall sound one blast of the foghorn every 2 minutes.
- D) The vessel shall sound three blasts on the whistle every 2 minutes.

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Rule 30, an anchored vessel exhibits an all-round white light forward (and aft if 50m+) by night, and one black ball forward by day.

Q30. INLAND ONLY A vessel displaying a flashing blue light is _____.

- A) transferring dangerous cargo
- B) a law enforcement vessel**
- C) a work boat
- D) engaged in a race

Rule Citation & Explanation: Under Inland Navigation Rules, for the condition where 'A vessel displaying a flashing blue light is', the correct requirement is: 'a law enforcement vessel'. This standard ensures clear navigational intent and collision avoidance.