

Coastal Skipper & Yachtmaster Offshore

Exam Syllabus

Candidates may be given the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge or competence in the areas listed below. In each section the examiner will expect to see the candidate take full responsibility for the management of the vessel and crew.

In Yachtmaster Offshore exams the candidate will be expected to demonstrate competence based on broad experience.

In Coastal Skipper exams the candidate will be expected to demonstrate understanding but may not have had the opportunity to practise all aspects of the syllabus under a range of different weather conditions.

It is our experience at Marine Matters that students who attend a practical without having undertaken the theory course first, struggle through the practical phase. The rare exceptions to this, are those that are converting from Yachtmaster sail or have many years of navigational experience.

1. International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea

Questions will be confined to the International Regulations and although candidates must be aware of the existence of Local Regulations, they will not be expected to memorise specific local regulations.

- General rules (1-3)
- Steering and sailing rules (4-19)
- Lights and shapes (20-31)
- Sound and light signals (32-37)
- Signals for vessels fishing in close proximity (Annex II)
- Distress signals (Annex IV)

2. Safety

Candidates will be expected to know what safety equipment should be carried on board a motor yacht, based either on the recommendations in the RYA Boat Safety Handbook (C8), the ISAF Special Regulations or the Codes of Practice for the Safety of Small Commercial Vessels. In particular, candidates must know the responsibilities of a skipper in relation to:

- Safety harnesses
- Lifejackets
- Distress flares
- Fire prevention and fighting
- Liferafts
- Knowledge of rescue procedures

3. Boat Handling

Candidates for Coastal Skipper examinations will be expected to answer questions or demonstrate ability in simple situations only. Candidates for Yachtmaster Offshore will be expected to answer questions or demonstrate ability in more complex situations and will also be expected to show a higher level of expertise:

- Coming to and weighing anchor under power in various conditions of wind and tide
- All berthing and un-berthing situations in various conditions of wind and tide
- Recovery of man overboard
- Towing under open sea conditions and in confined areas
- Boat handling in confined areas
- Boat handling in heavy weather
- Helmsmanship
- Use of warps for securing in an alongside berth and for shifting berth or winding

4. General seamanship, including maintenance

- Properties, use and care of synthetic fibre ropes
- Knots
- General deck work at sea and in harbour
- Engine operations and routine checks

5. Responsibilities of Skipper

- Can skipper a motor cruiser
- Communication with crew
- Delegation of responsibility and watch keeping organisation
- Preparing vessel for sea and for adverse weather
- Tactics for heavy weather and restricted visibility
- Emergency and distress situations
- Victualling for a cruise and feeding at sea
- Customs procedures
- Standards of behaviour and courtesy

6. Navigation

- Charts, navigational publications and sources of navigational information
- Chart work including position fixing and shaping course to allow for tidal stream and leeway
- Tide and tidal stream calculations
- Buoyage and visual aids to navigation
- Instruments including compasses, logs, echo sounders, radio nav aids and chart work instruments

- Passage planning and navigational tactics
- Pilotage techniques
- Navigational records
- Limits of navigational accuracy and margins of safety
- Lee shore dangers
- Use of electronic navigation aids for passage planning and passage navigation
- Use of waypoints and electronic routing
- Use of radar for navigation, pilotage and collision avoidance

7. Meteorology

- Definition of terms
- Sources of weather forecasts
- Weather systems and local weather effects
- Interpretation of weather forecasts, barometric trends and visible phenomena
- Ability to make passage planning decisions based on forecast information

8. Signals

- Candidates for Yachtmaster Offshore and Coastal Skipper must hold the Restricted (VHF only) Certificate of Competence in radiotelephony or a higher grade of certificate in radiotelephony.