



ICS Examiners Report

Port and Terminals Management

Overall Comments Guidelines

The overall standard for the Port and Terminal examination in May 2024 was of a very high standard. Students produced strong answers on abbreviations, Health and safety practices, port ownership, berth handling indicators. The question on improving cash flow produced a range of differing solutions although few, if any, students were able to identify pre-funding as a potential technique to improve cash flow. Disappointingly a number of students failed to supply an organigram in Question two.

Overall Comments

The questions were selected from within the port and terminal management syllabus. Questions were set on Marketing, management structure, operational issues, relevant abbreviations, health and safety practices, finance and berth performance indicators.

Question one- Coastal Tankers

This question was reasonably well answered. Some students overlooked the requirement to produce a formal response which was disappointing. The majority of students who attempted this question tended to receive high marks. There were some positive comments on the berth, however the majority of students failed to discuss in any detail the storage terminal facility. The better answers discussed the physical and operational aspects of the berth and terminal and also discussed the requirement for a long-term lease to make the investment more viable.

Question Two: Management Structure

The question on management structure was well handled, although a number of students failed to supply an organigram. The students did however offer a detailed account of the senior management roles in a port authority. This covered Chief Executive roles, Financial Directors, Harbourmaster, Legals, HR, Commercial and Health and Safety roles.

Question Three Marketing- Abbreviations

This was generally well answered by nearly every student who chose to answer it. The students seemed aware of all of the abbreviations EDI, IMDG, IMO, VTS and AGV. All students were able to discuss and define the abbreviations.

Question Four Steel Terminal

This question was well answered. Students were able to offer detail on the requirements for a suitable berth with an appropriate draft. There were some good comments on the type of cargo handling equipment quay storage area and undercover warehousing. The students who scored the highest marks extended the answer to introduce the concept of the steel terminal as an intermodal hub.

Question Five- Health and Safety Practices

The question on health and safety practices was well handled. The majority of students were able to offer a range of relevant health and safety practices would be expected to be found in a container terminal. PPE, Safety lighting, toolbox talks, safety walkways, health and safety posters, non-smoking areas, safe container handling and a general health and safety culture were all discussed.

Question Six – Port Ownership

This was a popular question, and the vast number of students selected private and public ports, and were able to discuss the different business models in some depth.

Some students also chose to select landlord and tool ports and were able to give equally impressive answers.

Nearly all students seemed very comfortable with the concept of this question.

Question Seven- Cash Flow

This created a wider range of answers from students than perhaps was expected. The main solution would be to ensure all vessels calling at the port were prefunding the port via the port agents. However this “silver bullet” option was largely ignored. Some students linked cash flow to increased revenue and productivity which although relevant up to a point does not necessarily improve the cash flow. Students gained marks by discussing improved methods of credit and debit management, this was commendable. On review this question will not be used in future.

Question Eight – Performance indicators

The question on performance indicators was very well answered, most students were able to offer numerous relevant examples of performance indicators which are commonplace in the Port industry. Berth throughput, container TEU handling, gang output and berth utilisation were some of the major ratios included. The students who attempted this question tended to score high marks.