SOM Examiners report Nov 2024

General

It is fundamental, when taking the exam, to read the question carefully and then answer it. If a question has four parts (a,b,c &d) and you are told to answer all parts of the question then it is important to understand that that this requires four answers. Knowing that the exam might require drawing and illustrating a map it would seem common sense to be prepared for this with pencils, a ruler, eraser etc. Be prepared. Read the instructions, you must only answer five 5 questions. Concentrate on doing your best five and if you start one and then realise you cannot continue make sure you clearly cross out what you have done so it is clear to the examiner. Look at all the questions before you start because some often have some relevance to another. In this paper questions 3,6and 8 each had elements that linked them to a varying extent.

Looking back at the past Examiners Reports on the ICS website is your best chance to gain familiarity with the exam and what is required to pass it. And looking back at these it is notable that in many of the subjects the poor standard of **Maritime Geography** demonstrated by many candidates has been a consistent worry. Very worrying when the New Orleans, Singapore, Malacca Strait, Qingdao, and the Port of Tubarao are still being misplaced. How can you be trusted in ship operations if you cannot locate these places. You must show a reasonable understanding of this. Shipping has always been a worldwide business and a good knowledge of that world is essential. There is no excuse for ignorance in a world of smart phones. A map should always show relevant ports, routes and geographical features on that route such as canals, capes, seas, oceans, and special areas affected by weather, currents or hazards. All of these, relevant to the voyage show your knowledge. Do not waste time naming irrelevant details such as distant seas and countries as these get no extra marks.

Q1 Costs.
As ever a popular question and this was generally done quite well but it is important to carefully read the question and answer all the parts. This was a two-part question but several decided to combine their answer into one which made marking more of a challenge. Had candidates ever read previous examiner's reports they could have avoided this mistake.
Part (a) asked the candidate to explain the difference between the three main costs and why these were divided this way. Several answered this correctly but some relied on using examples as their answer which was not so successful.
Part (b) asked for details of the typical costs included in these categories and should have been done better. A brief list will get some marks but details get more.

Q2. The ship description and drawing was as usual the most popular question in the exam with real opportunities for getting high marks by showing your knowledge of the layout of the majority of commercial vessels be they Dry Bulk, Tankers or Container vessels. Candidates were asked to draw a profile (side view) and cross section (front view) of a vessel. Some still waste time drawing a plan (a bird's eye view) that was not required or given marks. When drawing a profile turn the paper to a landscape view and use the full length to allow more detail. Several drawings were too small, as usual, lacking detail, limiting labelling and missing marks. It is important to show your knowledge of the layout and equipment in the fo'castle area and the stern arrangement as these are common to most vessels. You can do this by a short list of the equipment to be found there. You do not get marks for saving paper, in fact it makes it difficult to give them. Big drawings with a wealth of detail get the most marks. It seems that some candidates are getting the message.
Examiners want to see accuracy with the dimensions you give to the vessels. A Supramax vessel is a large Handymax with beam of 32.3M and a length of 190-200M, slightly smaller than an Ultramax but a greater depth and draft. The vessel operates in the geared trades but can use the old locks

loaded can load a greater SDWT of around 55-60KMT KMT. It is popular size particularly for longer voyages.
It is the same with VLCC tankers. They all have similar dimensions LOA 330 M, beam 60-65 M and draft 22 M. Its SDWT will be around 300-320 KMT with a cubic cap of about 340KM3 (2 million bbls). These vessels normally are in the long-haul crude trade.
With four parts to the question all parts carry similar marks. Some of those for part (d) are allocated to the map so make sure you do this properly and keep in mind that the actual description of a trade will only be worth about 2-3 marks at best. You are asked for a simple voyage, so do one, use the map and keep the answer reasonably short.
If you are going to learn a route ensure that the one you choose is appropriate for the vessel, cargo and ports concerned and be VERY SURE you show this in detail using the map.

Q3. This question about the Risks covered by P&I Insurance was straightforward. You were asked to give details of these and what is included in each category. Those who concentrated on the Risks covered and giving details of these got good marks. Some decided to writing about how they operated and their finances and their interlinks for big claims. While this was interesting it was not asked for, wasted the candidates time and thereby missed out on the marks that would have been given if more risks had been covered properly. It is not good enough to say that Loss of Life is a Risk covered by the P&I or expect to get marks unless that loss was related to the crew, passengers or shore personnel at the ship.

Q4. This was quite a popular question which is not surprising at it was very straightforward for candidates who had practiced doing an actual voyage calculation. You should also develop a simple calculation in table format which shows each part of the voyage, ballast passages, load, loaded passages and discharge as well as any delays together with distances and port times as appropriate and fuel consumptions. This makes it easy to see the usage, the days used and the totals at the end. This means that determining the cost of the bunkers used in total is simple using FIFO. There were some very good answers with several getting high marks and candidates who made simple mistakes in calculations only lost marks for this, and were not penalised later in the question. Candidates should not decide to use arbitrary rounding up or adding extra days for operations such as waiting for berth unless told to do this. Use only the information given in the exam paper.
a) This is a relatively simple cargo question really to test if a candidate knows what to do. Given the cubic capacity was 77,110 M3 and SF 1.41 the max cargo will be **54,687.9 MT** (54,688 MT) which will cube out the vessel. It should be obvious that with a SDWT of 61,589 MT the vessel will have about 7,000 MT of spare DWT so the fuel and constant will not affect the cargo and Candidates who mentioned this and that this figure also met the CP requirement of50 KMT +/- 10% i.e. MT got full marks for this part. Those who ignored this and worked out the DWAT or DWCC without any reference to the stowage factor or vessels cubic capacity did not. Candidates must be aware of SSHEX & SHINC and be familiar with using these.
b) Your choice for bunkering was relatively straightforward. The vessel needed to take sufficient bunkers during the voyage to replace all that was used on the voyage, plus the required increase in the ROB. As was made clear in the question a careful calculation of the different voyage legs ballast/ load/ laden/ discharge correctly using SSHINC and SSHEX and the right speed should have shown that the bunkers used on the voyage were 369MT LSFO 0.5%S & 109 MT LSGO 0.1%S. Kobe is is a port in Japan which is still using LSFO 0.5%S. Adding the extra bunkers to increase the ROB meant that the bunkers required then to meet this were **679 MT LSFO 0.5%S, and 159MT LSGO 0.1%S**.
Only the bunkers USED on the voyage should be in the costs of the voyage not all those taken.
Some candidates worked out the use and decided that the bunkers used between San Francisco and Vancouver would reduce the ROB of LSGO below the margin but the safety margin is only important at sea away from land. That said it made them take bunkers at San Francisco which was right but for

the wrong reason. The real reason is the margin between the cost of both LS bunkers at San Francisco and Vancouver is **$12 pMT.** Taking the quantity needed 679MT and 159MT= 838M x $12. **Which is $10,056 extra at Vancouver.** The extra cost at San Francisco is $2,500 (Barge) + $2,500 (DRC 6hrs) + $600 (1MT LSGO 0.1%)= **$5,600.**
Answer part b) Bunker at San Francisco 679 MT LSFO 0.5%S= 159 MT LSGO 0.1%S
c) Calculation should be simple with the right method and correct figures.
Answer part c) Daily net profit is $12,250 pd.

Q5. This was a four-part question with your Panamax vessel is due to load Grain in New Orleans for discharge in Ulsan. Generally, this question was done quite well by those who showed some knowledge of the precautions to be taken and preparation to be made when loading grain but in general terms a vessel will need to know the SF of the cargo, the quantity it can load and the subsequent maximum loaded draft and the agents at the port will be able to provide this. This will then need to be compatible with the cp terms and the depths at the ports. The vessel must be grain clean and familiar with the precautions to be taken during before, during and after loading and its carriage. In every type of fixture, the details of the laydays, etas and charter party requirements must be made known to correct parties together with availability of berths, bunkers and the cargo. Mention should be made of draft surveys, and of charterers surveyors together with the integrity of hatches and bilges. All candidates should be clear that the **IMSBC is not the code under which Grain is carried which is the International Code for the Safe Carriage of Grain.**
During and after loading the grain will need to be kept dry and properly trimmed to prevent any chance of shifting. Fumigation may be needed before or after loading. On the voyage, checks should be carried out regularly for any heating of the cargo or sign of water ingress and suitable ventilation should be carried out.
The route from New Orleans to Ulsan should be obvious to anyone knowing the location of the biggest Grain loading port in the world and the map should show this. One candidate moved it to the US East Coast and another confused the Atlantic with the Pacific and another went round Cape Horn. The question specifically directed candidates to use the map and mark on it at least the Load and discharge ports together with the Canal, seas and other significant and most identified these. The likely weather on route was quite well done.

Q6. A popular question that was generally done well with some good marks. Some candidates showed real knowledge of the structure and roles of the different departments in a management company and were able to expand these by mentioning a variety of responsibilities and tasks covered. Some failed to include an organisation diagram or did the minimum possible which meant they could not get many marks for this and that may well have made their answers less complete as a diagram showing the roles often leads to you being able to add to your essay the extra duties that may fall to the different departments when you have written this down. For instance, writing that there is an insurance department is one thing but it is a bit of a closed end. Showing it on a drawing may lead to what kind of insurance P&I or H&M, how will it be paid, what other insurance is needed like war risk, what would the company do in a situation like a war, do we have a crisis management team, who is on that team, what about the DPA, what about superintendents, will we need legal advice, are funds available for hostage situations this could go on and the more points you make the more marks you get. It is not enough to have three boxes marked Commercial, Technical, and Operations with below each a box marked Commercial Manager and so on.

7. IMSBC and BWMC. While not a popular question those candidates that did try this question showed some real knowledge in particular of the IMSBC identifying the different groups A,B,& C in the Code and the hazards that they represented and examples of the cargoes. They also did well with various acronyms, BCSN, TML, IMDG, and MHB.
IMSBC was not quite so well done but several candidates also had a good grasp of this subject and familiarity with BWMPs, BWRBs and other parts of the Convention. A good effort.

8. This question should be expected by candidates as it has been a regular feature for many years and is designed to test their knowledge of an operational office and the Insurance cover for the cargo, the vessel, the crew and the wider world. It was a four-part question designed to allow candidates to consider

a) what actions should be taken on board,

b) what actions should be expected by the managers,

c) what insurances were in place,

d) whether General Average might be a consideration.

Part a) looks for the action of the crew and local resources to ensure the safety of the vessel and its personnel and render assistance to the injured together with finding out what has happened. This was done with varying success but MUST concentrate first on the safety of the ship together with attention to the injured. The former comes first as otherwise it might further harm the latter if ignored.

Part b) once the vessel is safe, the injured are being attended to and the situation clear about the extent of the problem, is when the managers are contacted probably via the DPA for them to contact all the other parties and arrange as necessary. Do not neglect the local resources of the shore authorities and your agent.

Part c) was seeking your knowledge of the Insurances in place which broadly was for the vessel, the third parties involved and the cargo, H&M cover, P&I cover and Cargo Insurance. All may be interlinked and this will need specialised knowledge.

Part d) It was your chance to show your knowledge of General Average, “There is a general average act where any extraordinary sacrifice or expenditure is voluntarily and reasonably made or incurred in time of peril for the purpose of preserving the property imperilled in the common adventure”. Those who were able to do this by quoting the maxim were able to draw a conclusion.