

Examiner's Report NOVEMBER 2015 Offshore Support Industry

General comment

The highest score achieved was only 71% and the lowest was 0% (a first for me) which showed in the overall pass rate of 42%. Three of the eight questions proved problematical for the candidates and credit should be given to those that did attempt them.

Notwithstanding this, by avoiding them, many candidates showed a lack of background reading/study into the offshore industry as whole. This subject is very specific and requires a depth of knowledge of the sector to be able to achieve marks.

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Question 1

3 Candidates attempted this question. A problematical question for most as it required both an understanding of what was being asked along with a technical/operational understanding of the contractual/legal issues the special activities generate. To answer this question properly does require a clarity of thought in order to clearly identify those elements of special activities that the Charter Party wouldn't normally address.

Question 2

2 Candidates attempted this question but both misunderstood what was being asked and both answered a question that hadn't been asked. The small number of candidates attempting to answer this question potentially indicates a bigger problem in candidates not properly understanding the scope of a Charter Party and some basic P&I insurance principles. The simple answers that would have secured high marks should have stated that Contractual Liability is a non-statutory liability but is a liability under the contract. Hence it would lie outside standard P&I cover and would therefore require an extension to the cover. Legal Liability extension cover would be similar but for those legal liabilities not covered by standard P+I insurance (e.g hydrocarbons across the deck).

Question 3

15 Candidates attempted this question and the results were mixed. Many drawings (profile and plan views) could have been better and several candidates failed due to being unable to catalogue clearly the capacities and capabilities of their chosen vessel. Overall however it was one of the highest scoring questions

Question 4

17 Candidates attempted this question. Most understood the concept of cabotage but not the variety of ways in which it manifests itself. Its application to the OSV industry was also not fully understood particularly in describing pros and cons. An example would be that it can be expected answers would highlight the ability of cabotage to grow a domestic OSV industry but not how this would happen if certified/experienced crews were not available to start with. Not everyone used the world map as required and some of those that did showed a lack of geographical knowledge.

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Question 5

18 Candidates attempted this question – Whilst most understood the broad differences between the markets, many answers were superficial in giving the pros and cons of each to both Charterers and Owners respectively. Real reasons and drivers were much less well understood and this was where most marks were lost. This was also a question where a well-structured answer could have helped the candidates to answer both clearly and without contradicting themselves.

Question 6

3 Candidates attempted this question and the results were extremely poor. Given the impact at the time of this tragic accident, the loss of life and its far reaching consequences on AHTS vessel operations and rig move legislation in the future, it demonstrated a startling lack of interest in the OSV industry as a whole. Broader reading and study of the OSV industry should be strongly encouraged as simply reading the text book will not in itself provide the deeper understanding of the industry necessary to achieve a high score.

Question 7

15 Candidates attempted this question. One of the most popular and successful questions and this was seen in the 67% pass rate. The acronyms were, generally, well known with one exception (DPO stands for Dynamic Positioning Operator, not Officer) but most marks were in fact lost when describing/explaining the actual purpose/meaning of the acronyms. These acronyms form part of the daily language in the OSV industry and understanding them could be deemed a near prerequisite to a career in the OSV industry.

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Question 8

19 Candidates attempted this question – 100% attempted this question which is unsurprising given the importance of DP in the OSV industry. Regretfully, a true lack of understanding and correct terminology pulled most marks down. There is a real need to have candidates coming into the industry recognise that a technical grasp of the subject is key to its understanding and its commercial and operational application. The most common misunderstanding was on the true meaning of redundancy and of a single point failure. For example, almost everyone understood DP1 as a vessel having no redundancy and that any failure on board would be a single point failure. The reality being that most DP1 vessels probably have significant redundancy and that the majority of failures on such a vessel would not necessarily constitute a Single Point Failure.