

Alaska Marine Pilot Regional Local Knowledge Examination Focus Guide

This brief guide is intended to provide some basic direction for candidates preparing to take the Alaska Local Knowledge Examination. The questions in the database were developed by Alaska Pilots with the underlying theme that the particular item being tested is important knowledge for safe transits of Alaskan waters and more importantly, for the specific waterway in question.

Specific references to know include the Coast Pilots 8 & 9 and portions of the USCG Light List.

Aids to Navigation: The candidate should be conversant with the characteristics of major landfall aids to navigation, aids to navigation in critical passages, and aids to navigation generally visible from the Pilot Stations.

Tides and Currents: The candidate should know the average diurnal range of tide (provided from the NOAA Tide Table database) for the Bays, Ports and Harbors in general use by piloted vessels.

Environmental factors: Knowledge of localized phenomena such as ice accumulations, strong localized winds, area and time of the year when visibilities are frequently reduced and areas of strong tidal rips/disturbances is required.

Navigation Hazards and Waterway Relationships: The candidate should know the bodies of water to be transited for a normal transit from Pilot Station to port (and vice versa) and for transits from port-to-port. Specific information to know for particular transits is primarily on waterway characteristics associated with critical passages, and isolated dangers in close proximity to standard tracks. The candidate should be conversant with waterway distances and areas to meet/not meet vessel traffic. The candidate should be able to process a sample scenario for a meeting/overtaking situation in these waterways that involves his or her knowledge of distances, critical no-meeting/overtaking areas, and common geographic points of reference.

In addition to general waterway characteristics such as critical Aids to Navigation, distances and choke points for traffic, the candidate should have the ability to identify specific unmarked hazards to navigation that are of concerns to deep-draft vessel traffic.

A candidate should know the locations of primary facilities along the channel in major ports.

It is impractical to provide the candidate with each specific knowledge item to study. However the examination is primarily focused on the characteristics of each waterway that have the most significance for the safe transit of that waterway.