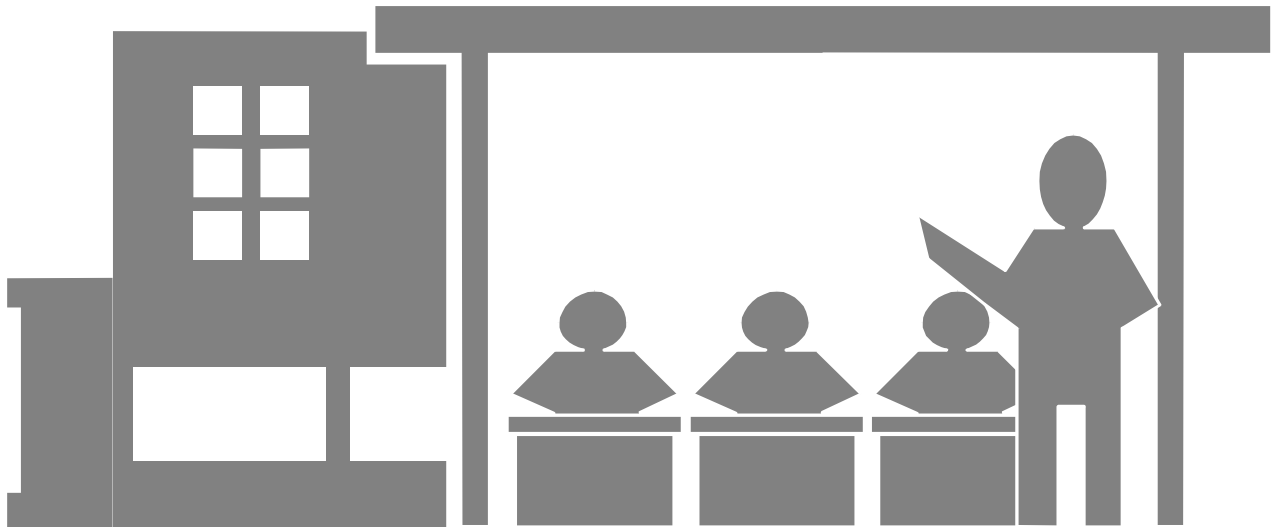


U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security

United States  
Coast Guard



## SWE OFFICER HANDBOOK



**IMPORTANT:** All SWE Officers should read this booklet in its entirety prior to each service wide exam cycle. This booklet contains specific instructions on receipt, administration and post exam procedures.

U. S. Coast Guard  
Pay and Personnel Center (ADV)  
(Updated May 2022)

## **Latest changes to this handbook:**

- 1. Page 8- Clarified requirements for storage of exams upon receipt from PPC.**
- 2. Page 9- Clarified chain of custody requirements for the shipment of forwarded exams.**
- 3. Page 23- Clarified chain of custody requirements for the shipment of swe material after administration of exam.**

## **Prior Changes to This Handbook:**

- 1. Page 16 – Clarified the Verbatim Instructions discussion on sharing exam information after the exam.**

- 1. Page 17 – Updated the Verbatim Instructions to:**

- clarify the restrictions on electronic devices in the exam room**
- notify testers that the exam sticker label will be needed to complete answer sheets**

- 2. Page 17 – Updated the Verbatim Instructions to:**

- clarify the restrictions on electronic devices in the exam room**
- notify testers that the exam sticker label will be needed to complete answer sheets**

- 2. Page 19 – Updated the Verbatim Instructions to indicate that questions on the EPME portion of the test are generated from the references listed within the EPME Performance Qualification Standards (EPQS).**

- 2. Page 22 – Clarified process for preparing the inner envelope and exam answer sheets for shipment to PPC.**

- 1. Various Pages, Updated References for the PPC Servicewide Examination Guide, SWE Officer Handbook, and COMDTINST M1000.2C.**

- 2. Be aware of scheduling and substitute SWE policy changes outlined in the 1 SWE message traffic, ACN 110-21**

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# General Information/Requirements for SWE Officers

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**Introduction** This section provides general information and requirements for Exam Board Units and SWE Officers.

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**References** The following directives contain policy and procedures pertaining to the SWE process:

- a) Servicewide Exam (SWE) Guide:  
<https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/ppc/Shared%20Documents/ADV/SWE%20Guide.pdf>
  - b) The latest SWE Announcement Message (ALCGENL for regular SWE or ALCGRSV for reserve SWE) :  
<https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/library/generalmessages/SitePages/Home.aspx>
  - c) Enlistments, Evaluations, and Advancement Manual, COMDTINST M1000.2C, : <https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/Pages/main.aspx>
  - d) Reserve Policy Manual, COMDTINST M1001.28B, at:  
<https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/Pages/main.aspx>
  - e) COMDTINST M1500.10 (series), Encl (6), Performance, Training and Educational Manual: <https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/Pages/main.aspx>
- 

**Local Exam Boards & SWE Officer Grade Requirements**

Servicewide exams may only be received, stored, and proctored by command designated SWE Officers who are commissioned Officers, Master Chief Petty Officers or E8's serving as Officer-in-Charge (OIC), or civilians GS9 or above. If additional personnel are needed to assist the SWE Officer(s), monitors in the grade of E6 or above or GS5 or above may be used. Monitors may not proctor exams or have access to SWE booklet content. E6 and above active duty members may only act as monitors during exams for ranks equal to or below their current pay grade.

Note: Exam Boards may have more than one designated SWE Officer as per the "SWE Officer Designation" section below.

Commanding Officers who can meet the exam board policy requirements of article 3.B. of reference (C) may send a request to [PPC-DG-CustomerCare@uscg.mil](mailto:PPC-DG-CustomerCare@uscg.mil) via email and request to have their command set as a SWE Exam Board and receive/store/administer SWE exams at their unit.

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**SWE Officer Designation**

More than one SWE Officer may be designated for large exam board units if needed. The trend has been for CO's to assign their local Educational Service Officer (ESO) and/or Test Control Officer (TCO) to also be a SWE Officer at the unit. All three are separate designations with separate requirements:

- A designated ESO.
- A TCO is designated by DANTES to administer DANTES/CLEP and other distance learning courses and exams.
- A SWE Officer is designated by the unit Commanding Officer of qualifying exam boards and receives and administers only SWE's.

Care should be taken by commands not to designate an ESO or TCO as SWE Officer unless that member meets the grade requirements listed above and is trained in SWE procedures. There is no formal designation letter template for SWE Officers. Commanding Officers may use local designation procedures.

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**Monitors**

A ratio of 1 monitor to every 25 testers during test administration is required to prevent collusion. The above section provides the grade requirements for monitors. The SWE Officer must be present at all times during SWE administration and may not allow a monitor to administer exams or view the contents of SWE booklets. For groups of 25 or less, only the SWE Officer is required to be present.

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# Preparation for Administration of SWE's

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## **Introduction**

This section provides instructions to SWE Officers in preparing for administration of servicewide exams and will discuss:

- Preparation Requirements
  - Notification of Non-Receipt of Exams
- 

## **Preparation for Administration of SWEs**

Approximately one month before the scheduled date of the examination, the senior SWE Officer shall review section 3.B of reference (c) and make preliminary arrangements to ensure the following:

- An adequate examining room(s) is available. The room should be:
    - Quiet
    - Comfortable (AC or Heat as appropriate)
    - Well lit
    - Properly ventilated
    - The candidates writing surface should be, clean, smooth and large enough for booklets and answer sheets to lie flat
  - The required number of monitors are available to assist in administration;
  - Notification of examination date and times is made to candidates;
  - Materials required to administer the examinations are available per 3.B.6.d of reference (c);
  - Secure stowage for examinations and materials is available
  - Preparation of a seating arrangement is made. Candidates taking examinations in the same rating should not sit next to or across from one another.
- 

## **Notification of Non-Receipt of Examinations**

SWE's are shipped via 2 day FEDEX about 30 days prior to the scheduled exam date. If exams are not received at least ten days before the scheduled exam date, check with your supply/mail dept before notifying notify PPC (ADV) via E-mail at [PPC-DG-CustomerCare@uscg.mil](mailto:PPC-DG-CustomerCare@uscg.mil). Note: If an exam for a single member was not received in the shipment, check the members online PDE and verify first that the member shows an "eligible" status, then check the Examining Board OPFAC listed at the top of the PDE to identify where the examination was mailed. The command is responsible for contacting the SWE Officer of the command that the examination was mailed to and make arrangements for the examination to be forwarded to the correct Examining Board.

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## **Requesting Substitute Exams**

The policy and criteria for substitute SWE's is contained in COMDTINST M1000.2C, Art. 3.B.2. Additional procedural information is contained in Servicewide Examination Guide, Page 18.

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## Action upon Receipt of SWE's

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### Introduction

This section lists actions to be taken by SWE Officers upon receipt of SWE's and will discuss:

- Checking Exam Packets
  - Notifying Members of Exams Received
  - Forwarding Exams
  - Packaging Exams to Forward
  - Shipment of Forwarded Exams
- 

### Checking Exam Packets

- Commands shall ensure the SWE packages remain unopened and in a secure location from the time they arrive onboard until the ESO/SWE proctor takes possession. Enlisted member's access to opened SWE materials should be reported to the Commanding Officer.
  - Read the flyer enclosed in the package for important information.
  - Review the SWE package contents to ensure the inner envelope or box was not opened and that all exams are sealed in plastic.
  - Review the enclosed shipping list and ensure an exam was received for each candidate who appears on the shipping list.
  - If you did not receive a test for an eligible candidate, notify PPC (ADV) immediately by email to [PPC-DG-CustomerCare@uscg.mil](mailto:PPC-DG-CustomerCare@uscg.mil).
  - If you did not receive an exam for an eligible candidate who recently reported, contact the previous command SWE Officer and ask that they forward the SWE via FEDEX.
  - Count the blank SWE answer sheets and verify that you have enough in the package for each exam and a few extras. If not, notify PPC (ADV) immediately by email to [PPC-DG-CustomerCare@uscg.mil](mailto:PPC-DG-CustomerCare@uscg.mil) and request additional answer sheets. **NOTE: PHOTO COPIES OF ANSWER SHEETS MAY NOT BE USED.**
  - SWE Officers shall maintain positive custody of all Service Wide materials at all times when not secured in a GSA approved storage device. **Access to the storage device shall be limited to the designated SWE Officer and SWE proctors, and at no time shall an enlisted member have access to the storage device.**
-



**Notifying  
Members of  
Exams  
Received**

Immediately upon receipt of SWEs, notify all candidates in writing of the exams received, date, time and location of their test. Use the Plan Of The Week, Electronic Bulletin Boards, Email, etc.

**NOTE:** Do **NOT** post a copy of the SWE Shipping List in public view as it contains member social security numbers, which is PII information not to be published.

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**Forwarding  
Exams**

If you receive a test for a member who has transferred PCS or is TDY or on leave in the area of another unit, forward the below items to the unit:

1. Exam booklet(s)
2. Answer sheet(s)
3. Photocopy of this SWE Officer Handbook (if being forwarded to other than a SWE Exam Board)
4. A copy of the original shipping list containing the member's test data.  
Important: The forwarding SWE Officer shall annotate the original and copy of the shipping list as follows:

**“Forwarded to (Unit Name), (OPFAC XX-XXXXX)”**

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**Packaging  
Exams to  
Forward**

All exams forwarded to another OPFAC shall be:

- Packaged using an inner and outer cover (envelopes, wrap or cartons).
  - The inner cover must be sealed and marked “SWE-FOUO”.
  - The outer cover must be sealed and marked with the forwarding address and return address only.
- 

**Shipment of  
Forwarded  
Exams**

The following applies:

- SWEs may be hand-delivered to another exam board by a designated SWE Officer, an Officer or GS9 and above employee. SWE Officers may obtain permission from PPC (ADV) for trusted enlisted members to hand carry SWEs on a case-by-case basis.
- All SWE materials must be forwarded via traceable means in the event of being lost in shipment. The preferred method of shipment is FEDEX as they have proven to have good tracking services at [www.fedex.com](http://www.fedex.com). Priority Mail may be used if a “Signature Confirmation” is added to the package. Note: If a “flat rate” Priority Mail Envelope is used vice a normal Priority Mail Envelope, postage is based on a flat rate rather than by weight and not as costly. **DO NOT USE REGULAR MAIL, CERTIFIED MAIL or REGISTERED MAIL for SWE’s as they cannot be tracked.**
- All shipping tracking numbers must be maintained by the shipping unit so that packages may be traced in the event they are lost in shipment.
- SWE officers shall maintain positive chain of custody of the Service Wide exams from the moment they arrive at the unit until the postal service or FEDEX takes possession, **transferring custody of SWE material to an enlisted mail handler is prohibited after original packaging from PPC has been opened.**

## Action on Exam Day

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**Introduction** This section provides instructions to SWE Officers in pre-exam preparation on the day of the exam and will discuss:

- Exam Room on Exam Day
  - Exam Material
  - Optional Items
  - Prohibited Items
- 

**Exam Room on Exam Day** The exam room shall be under the direct supervision of a designated SWE Officer who will be present at all times during administration. Monitors who are senior to those being examined may assist the SWE Officer to maintain a ratio of one SWE Officer or Monitor to each 25 candidates.

---

**Exam Materials** The following materials must be on hand for each candidate:

- Unopened exams (provided by PPC(ADV))
- A blank answer sheet (PPC-4801) (provided by PPC (ADV))
- Two sheets of scratch paper (more sheets if required)
- Two sharpened #2 lead pencils with erasers
- SWE Challenge Worksheets (see encl. (1) to this guide)
- Extra answer sheet, if needed due to damage of first one
- For BM and OS candidates – Rolling Plotter, Compass, Divider, Maneuvering Board (Ntl. Stock #7642 01 400 9445 NIMA Ref No. WOBZP5090). Members may choose to bring these items if they prefer to use their own rather than those provided by their command or the Exam Board.

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**Optional Items** Members may bring these optional items to the test room:

- Calculator – Strictly for numeric calculations. It may not have the ability to store, produce or reproduce text. Indicators of these type of calculators are keys labeled “QWERTY” or “ALPHA”
- Nautical Slide Rulers – may be used if needed
- For BM and OS candidates – Rolling Plotter, Compass, Divider, Maneuvering Board

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**Prohibited  
Items**

Members may not bring these items into the test room:

- Electronic devices of any kind (except calculators described above) – this includes pocket organizers, PDAs, handheld or laptop computers, electronic writing pads, pen-input devices, etc.
  - Digital or other types of photographic devices
  - Watches that display text or video or any device that can be connected to a wifi signal.
  - Watches or timers that emit sound – if a watch/timer does emit sound, but the sound can be turned off, it may be used if sound *is* turned off
  - Mobile phones, pagers, walkie-talkies, etc.
-

# Action during Examination

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## Introduction

This section provides guidance for exam units during administration of service wide exams and will discuss:

- Seating of candidates
  - Assistance during examination
  - Verbatim Instructions to Candidates
  - Discrepancies in examinations
  - Leaving during examinations
  - Arriving Late for the Exam
- 

## Seating of Candidates

Follow these seating instructions.

| Step | Action  |
|------|---|
| 1    | Muster candidates and check military ID cards to ensure the member is not taking a test for someone else.   |
| 2    | No candidate is to do anything with the materials in the room until specifically told to do so by the SWE Officer. This includes, but is not limited to, writing on the blank scratch paper or entering any information on or in the exam materials provided by the test administrator before the test SWE Officer says to “Open your test booklets and begin”. |
| 3    | Ensure that members taking the same test cannot see each other’s answer sheets. Also keep in mind that the E-PME section is the same across all ratings for the same pay grade.   |
| 4    | SWE Officer and proctors shall be alert to the progress of exams and forbid any type of communication between candidates during the exam.   |
| 5    | The SWE Officer shall remain in the room at all times. Note: A Monitor is not SWE Officer.  |
| 6    | There must be a ratio of not less than one SWE Officer and/or Monitor for each 25 candidates.   |

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## Assistance during Examination

- The SWE Officer may explain the meaning of instructions to candidates, but shall NOT interpret questions, discuss exam topics, or assist in solving any problem or question.
  - The SWE Officer and or monitors must watch for and report any collusion among candidates.
  - Exams may NOT be administered orally unless specifically authorized by PPC (ADV) prior to the exam.
-

**Verbatim  
Instructions to  
Candidates**

When all candidates are seated and the exam materials have been distributed, the SWE Officer shall read aloud the “Verbatim Instructions To Candidates” found in the next section of this booklet, without deviation from the wording.

---

**Discrepancies  
in  
Examinations**

After reading the verbatim instructions and before the exam begins, candidates will be instructed to check their exam booklet for discrepancies. Follow the below steps for discrepancies listed:

| <b>Step</b> | <b>Action</b>   |
|-------------|---|
| 1           | <b>No Exam Booklet:</b> If a booklet is not available for a candidate, excuse them and follow the procedures for requesting a substitute exam as discussed in references (a) and (c).   |
| 2           | <b>Wrong Exam Booklet:</b> If the exam booklet with the members name sticker attached is for the wrong rating or pay grade and the correct booklet is not immediately available, the candidate will be excused and a substitute exam will be requested following the instructions discussed in the references (a) and (c). If an unused exam of the correct rating/grade is available due to another candidate not testing, it may be used. Notify PPC (ADV) of the discrepancy immediately following the exam. |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 3 | <b>Missing Pages:</b> If the exam booklet is missing pages or has unreadable questions due to poor print quality or damage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have the candidate continue to complete the test, skipping the missing or unreadable questions. Explain to the member that the unanswered questions will be prorated.</li><li>• Prorated means that the member gets the same percentage of items correct on the missing items as s/he answered correctly on the rest of the items in that section. For example, if there are 30 questions in the section and five questions are not readable or missing, the percentage of questions answered correctly for the 25 is given to the 5 unanswered questions.</li><li>• If the number of missing or unreadable questions is greater than 50% of a section, prorating will be based on the number of correct items for the entire exam. Do not destroy the exam with the missing pages, but return it to PPC (ADV) with a memo explaining the discrepancy.</li></ul> |
|---|--|

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**Leaving During Examinations**

- The SWE Officer shall assume possession of all examining materials during the candidate's absence.
  - Candidates will not be permitted to temporarily leave the exam room except for emergency reasons and then only if accompanied by an escort designated by the SWE Officer. The escort shall keep the candidate in constant view except in cases where privacy is required, such as using the rest room. In those cases the escort may remain outside the rest room door then escort the member back to the exam room.
  - Candidates, who depart for emergency reasons and are unable to return and complete the exam, may qualify for a substitute SWE depending on circumstances. The command may request a substitute following the guidance in section titled “Requesting Substitute SWE’s” in this guide.
  - Any candidate leaving without the permission of the SWE Officer shall be disqualified.
- 

**Arriving Late for the Exam**

- There is currently no official policy which prevents a member from being allowed to start a SWE after the locally scheduled exam time. The policy only states that the test be administered in the “a.m.” or “p.m.” as announced in the SWE Message for each cycle.
  - It is suggested that the decision lie with the unit CO or XO on a case-by-case basis, and that favorable consideration be given for what’s considered a valid reason for arriving late. If approved, the SWE Officer must allow the late start and the normal 3 ½ hours to complete the exam.
  - The alternatives to starting late is denying the member an opportunity to compete or, requesting a substitute exam. However, substitute exams are normally approved only for operational or emergency situations which prevented completion of the scheduled exam. Therefore, a late start should be given careful consideration before denying the member late entrance to the exam room.
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# Verbatim Instructions to Candidates

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**Introduction** This chapter provides verbatim instructions to the candidates to be read prior to administration of service wide exams.

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**Procedures** Read aloud the instructions printed below to all candidates prior to their exam.

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**Verbatim Instructions** It is vital to the integrity of the servicewide examination process that information not be prematurely disclosed. Consequently, this is a reminder that individuals taking servicewide examinations are advised that these tests are to be treated as **FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**. Upon completion of this exam, candidates shall not discuss the exam with other candidates who are scheduled to, but have not yet taken this examination. For example, those candidates in another time zone or candidates scheduled to take the exam or substitute exam at a later time or date. Following the exam, candidates may discuss and make notes on topics they recollect from the exam to aid them in future study for future exams. This information may be shared among peers or study groups after all exams have been administered, however, it is expressly prohibited from posting any servicewide information online or otherwise transmitting it via the Internet. The use of monitored CG applications such as MS Teams for study groups is authorized. The use of social media on non-CG networks for posting SWE related information remains prohibited.

This direction constitutes a lawful order under Article 92 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. By submitting a servicewide examination for scoring, candidates attest that they understand their obligation to comply with the terms and conditions of this order.

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Continued Next Page



**Verbatim  
Instructions  
(cont.)**

With the exception of authorized calculators, electronic devices capable of capturing, storing or reproducing any data are strictly prohibited from the testing location. Please turn off electronic devices, including cell phones, smart watches, activity bands, and any device capable of connecting to a wifi link, and give them to me. I will hold these devices until you have completed the exam, then return them to you. *(pause)*

You should have in front of you:

- An exam sealed in a plastic bag
- An answer sheet
- Two lead pencils
- Scratch paper
- A SWE Challenge Question Worksheet
- And possibly a hand-held calculator incapable of reproducing or storing any text.
- You may also have a nautical slide rule if needed.

In addition to these items, BM and OS Candidates may also request to be provided with or use their own:

- Rolling Plotter
- Parallel Ruler
- Compass
- Divider
- Maneuvering boards

Compare the information on the exam label with that in the upper right corner of your test book cover to ensure the exam ID number is the same in both places. If you find any differences, or if the exam is for the wrong rate, please raise your hand.

*Note: if a discrepancy exists, refer to section titled, “Discrepancies in Exams” after completing these verbatim instructions, and have the member with the discrepancy stand by until you assess the problem.*

The information on the sticker label which is attached to the top right corner of the plastic bag holding your test booklet will be used in a moment to complete your answer sheet. Open the package at the seal and remove the booklet.

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Continued Next Page

*Verbatim  
Instructions  
(cont.)*

*Be sure to follow these instructions as I read them to you:*

- Do not bend, fold, or tear your answer sheet. If you do, the extremely sensitive optical scanner which scores it may not be able to score your exam.
- Any unnecessary marks that appear on the answer sheet may cause the scanner to score your answers incorrectly.
- In the upper left section of the answer sheet, write your:
  - Last Name, First Name and Middle Initial
  - Current Rate and Grade (e.g., DC3/E4, AMTC/E7...)
  - Exam Rate and Grade (e.g., DC2/E5, AMTCS/E8...)
  - Exam Board Unit Name. Enter the “Exam Unit” name as it appears on the exam sticker label attached to the top right of your exam booklet.
- Exam Board Unit OPFAC. Enter the “Exam Board OPFAC” as it appears on the exam sticker label attached to the top right of your exam booklet.
- In the upper right corner of your answer sheet, please write your social security number in the squares provided. You will be given time later to fill in the ovals.
- Next, enter the Examination Identification Number in the squares provided. It’s made up of three sets of numbers. Looking at your exam sticker label, you will see the words: Code, Series, and Serial #.
  - Starting with the Code, write those three numbers in the first three boxes of the Exam ID Number on your answer sheet.
  - Next, use the 2 numbers listed after the word, “Series” for the next part of the Exam ID number.
  - Finally, you will see that there are 4 numbers listed after the word “Serial#”. It begins with a zero, which has already been entered in the Exam ID box. Place the last three numbers from the Serial # to complete your Exam ID Number.
- The SSN and Exam ID Numbers must be correct for the optical scanner to score your test. Please verify you have them correct and let me know if you have a question. (pause for questions)
- Now fill in the ovals for your SSN and the Exam Identification Number sections. Please make sure the ovals you darken match the numbers you wrote in the SSN and Exam Identification Number boxes. Notice that the top ovals are a zero, not a one. When you darken ovals you should **not** be able to read the preprinted numbers through your pencil mark. Your pencil mark should be dark enough to block them out. **Failure to do so may result in your exam not being scored and your exam destroyed.**
- You will not be permitted to leave prior to completing your exam except to use the rest room or for emergency reasons, and then only if accompanied by an escort designated by the SWE Officer. The SWE Officer will hold all exam materials during your absence. Anyone leaving without permission will be disqualified.

**Verbatim  
Instructions  
(cont.)**

- Any evidence of misconduct during the exam will also cause your disqualification.
- If anything in your exam book is unreadable or missing, raise your hand for assistance.
- The SWE Officer and monitors may only explain the meaning of instructions to you; they may not interpret questions, define words, discuss exam topics, or assist in solving any problem or question.
- When you have finished, take your exam booklet, answer sheet, any challenged question sheets, scratch paper, pencils and plastic bag to the SWE Officer.
- This exam has two separate sections which tests your knowledge of your rating and then tests your knowledge of the Enlisted Professional Military Education or EPME. Questions on the rating specific portion of the test are generated from the references listed on your Rating Performance Qualification Standard (RPQS). Questions on the EPME portion of the test are generated from the references listed within the EPME Performance Qualification Standards (EPQS). Each item of the test should be answered with the response that best matches the policy referenced in the latest version of your RPQS/EPQS.
- Please be aware that a blank page may separate the two sections of the exam. These exams contain a total of 150 questions. You should answer all questions in sequence so that you do not get your answers mixed on the answer sheet. If you do skip items, be careful to mark your answers in the right place. If you make an error, be sure to erase it thoroughly. Answer all questions, even if you are unsure of the correct answer. No penalties are incurred for guessing.
- If you feel a question is incorrect and wish to challenge it, complete the worksheet provided. Each question challenged requires a separate worksheet. Raise your hand if you need additional worksheets.
- **Upon completion of this exam you will turn in all testing materials including all scratch paper to the SWE proctor. Failure to do so could result in administrative action.**
- Are there any questions about the instructions you have been given?
- **Any concerns regarding the proper administration of this exam should be expressed to your Commanding Officer prior to contacting the Pay and Personnel Center.**

*Note: After all questions have been answered, note the time and say:*

- You will have three and one-half hours to complete your exam. Open your exam booklet and begin. Good luck!

*Note: At the end of three and one-half hours, say:*

- Stop. Lay down your pencils and close your exam booklet. Do not get up and leave until the SWE Officer has verified that your answer sheet has been properly completed.

*Note: As exam materials are collected or brought to the SWE Officer, check the Identifying Data at the top of the answer sheet to ensure Name, SSN and Test Id are properly filled out.*

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## Action after Examination

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**Introduction** This chapter provides guidance for exam units after administration of service wide exams.

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**Procedures** The below procedures will guide the SWE Officer through:

- Collecting exam materials after the SWE
- Preparing exam materials for return to PPC (ADV)
- Destroying exam booklets

**Collect Exam Materials**

Follow the below steps following the exam:

| <b>Step</b> | <b>Action</b>  |
|-------------|--|
| 1           | <p><b>Exam Materials:</b> Collect from each candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exam booklet</li> <li>• Answer sheet</li> <li>• <b>All scratch papers</b></li> <li>• Challenge questions worksheets</li> <li>• Exam plastic bag</li> </ul>   |
| 2           | <p><b>ID Blocks:</b> Verification of the top three blocks is critical to a test being properly scanned. Any exam (including RNA's) which do not have all ovals darkened in this section will not scan and score which may result in your exam being invalid and subsequently destroyed. Ensure all Exam ID data is filled in on form including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name Block</li> <li>• SSN</li> <li>• Exam ID</li> </ul>   |
| 3           | <p><b>Test Answers:</b> Check the answer sheet for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only one answer darkened for each question</li> <li>• Ovals are dark enough that you cannot read the letter printed in the oval through the pencil mark (too light)</li> <li>• Clean erasures of changed answers</li> <li>• No unnecessary marks on the answer sheet</li> </ul>   |
| 4           | <p><b>Returned Not Administered</b> exams (RNA's) must have all the top blocks of an answer sheet completed by the SWE Officer and ovals darkened as they're scanned along with administered exams to close out the DA exam file. Please Do <b>NOT</b> write "RNA" across or on RNA answer sheets. <b>Note:</b> If a substitute exam is authorized for a member who missed the scheduled test date, no RNA answer sheet is required for the first exam shipped.</p> <p>An RNA answer sheet is required for anyone not taking the SWE for any reason for which an original exam was shipped. Do not create an RNA answer sheet for the original if a substitute examination was requested and approved.</p> |

**Preparing Exam Materials for Return to PPC (ADV)**

Follow the below guidelines when returning test materials to PPC (ADV).

| Step | Action  |
|------|---|
| 1    | <p><b>Check Answer Sheets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the top three sections are correctly completed.</li> <li>• Exam Board Unit Name/OPFAC: If the member did not copy the information from his exam booklet label (attached to the plastic cover of the exam booklet) to the answer sheet as instructed, enter that Exam Board Unit Name and OPFAC, if you still have the plastic exam booklet cover. If not, enter the Exam Board Unit Name and OPFAC which appears at the top of the shipping list that the members name appears on, into the fields on the top left of the answer sheet.</li> <li>• <b>Do not staple, paper clip, fold, bend or wrinkle answer sheets.</b></li> <li>• Return all answer sheets at the same time.</li> <li>• Place answer sheets in a protective folder or box to prevent damage during shipping.</li> </ul> |
| 2    | <p><b>Shipping Lists:</b></p> <p>Annotate one copy of each shipping list (including those received with forwarded exams) to show the disposition of each exam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADMIN (administered)</li> <li>• RNA (returned not administered)</li> <li>• FWD TO “UNIT NAME/OPFAC #####”(forwarded to another unit)</li> <li>• FWD TO “Non CG” Unit Name, POC, Phone Number and email address</li> <li>• RCVD FM “UNIT NAME/OPFAC #####”(For exams received from other units, write in all identifying data on the shipping list for the exam)</li> <li>• AUTH SUB (authorized to take a substitute SWE)</li> <li>• Sign the shipping list as verification of data.</li> <li>• Print your name and phone number below your signature.</li> </ul>   |

**3 Inner Envelope:** The inner envelope should contain four separate stacks of items listed below. Answer sheets from multiple units or exams boards shall be in one stack and not separated. **The inner envelope must be marked FOUO.**

The four separated stacks of items are:

- (1) All Shipping Lists for all units received**
- (2) All Exam Answer Sheets for all units received**
- (3) All SWE Challenge Question Worksheets**
- (4) Address Change Form (if needed)**

Additional Instructions:

- **Shipping Lists:** All annotated, signed Shipping List(s) including those for exams forwarded from other exam boards.
- **Exam Answer Sheets:** Place all answer sheets in one stack for all units or exam boards in a protective folder to prevent damage. Do not separate administered from RNA answer sheets. Answer sheets **MUST** be sorted in shipping list(s) order. If not, they will be set aside and scored last due to ADV having to sort them into shipping list order.
- **SWE Challenge Question Worksheets:** All worksheets from all units in one stack. Please sort by rating and do **NOT** attach each challenge form to each of the members SWE Answer Sheet, but keep as a separate stack. These forms are immediately forwarded to test writers upon receipt for determination of challenge.
- **Address Change Form:** If the address shown on the FEDEX shipping label affixed to the package that contained your exams was incorrect, submit the form from enclosure (2), including a phone number for the POC.
- **If you are outconus, underway, or deployed and you have** concerns about the exams arriving within 3 weeks of the exam date. Contact PPC-ADV for guidance.

**Mark the inner envelope with notification that it contains testing material FOUO”.**

**Note: Do not return scratch paper, plastic bags or exam booklets (except for those exam booklets with errors as noted in section titled “Action During Exams”).**

**PLEASE DO NOT put heavy tape around envelope. Envelopes need to be easily opened with a letter opener by PPC (ADV). Strapping Tape with cloth fibers should not be used. Blank answer sheets may be saved for future SWE’s.**

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>4</b> | <p><b>Outer Envelope:</b> Place the sealed inner envelope into an outer envelope or box and address it to:</p> <p><b>Commanding Officer (ADV)<br/>Coast Guard Pay and Personnel Center<br/>444 SE Quincy St.<br/>Topeka, KS 66683-3591<br/>785-339-2200</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All SWE Officers must maintain positive control of all SWE Material until delivered to point of shipping.</b></li> <li>• Return SWE materials within 3 days of exam date or ASAP if delayed due to operations. If delayed more than two weeks due to operations, inform PPC(ADV) of delay.</li> <li>• All SWE materials must be shipped via traceable means in the event of being lost in shipment. The preferred method of shipment is 2-DAY FEDEX as they have proven to have good tracking services at <a href="http://www.fedex.com">www.fedex.com</a>. DO NOT use “over night” or “first overnight” FEDEX due to high cost.</li> <li>• Priority Mail may be used if FEDEX does not service the area, and a “Signature Confirmation” is added to the package. Note: If a “flat rate” Priority Mail Envelope is used vice a normal Priority Mail Envelope, postage is based on a flat rate rather than by weight and not as costly. <b>Shipping methods outside of FEDEX are not recommended.</b></li> <li>• <b>DO NOT USE REGULAR MAIL, CERTIFIED MAIL or REGISTERED MAIL as they cannot be tracked.</b></li> <li>• All shipping tracking numbers must be maintained by the shipping unit so that packages may be traced in the event they are lost in shipment.</li> <li>• SWE officers shall maintain positive chain of custody of the Service Wide exams from the moment they arrive at the unit until the postal service or FEDEX takes possession of the package containing the administered answer sheets, <b>transferring custody of SWE material to an enlisted mail handler is prohibited after original packaging from PPC has been opened.</b></li> </ul> |
|----------|--|

**Destroying Exam Booklets, Scratch Paper and Exam Labels**

The SWE Officer shall destroy all used and unused SWE booklets as soon as possible but not later than 10 days following the exam. Local shredding is the preferred method. Used scratch paper handed in by the examinees will also be destroyed as shall exam sticker labels containing SSN’s. Plastic exam bags do not need to be shredded if the labels are removed.



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*Undelivered, Lost, Opened or Compromised Exams*

**Introduction** This section outlines the procedures to follow for exams undelivered, lost, found opened upon receipt, or possibly compromised.

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**Reference** (a) Enlistments, Evaluations, and Advancements Manual COMDTINST M1000.2B Art. 3.B.3.d.

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**Definitions** **Undelivered Exam:** An exam which has been shipped from PPC (ADV), or received and forwarded by another exam board unit to your exam board unit, but does not reach its destination in the time promised by the carrier.

**Delivered But Not Received by SWE Officer:** An exam which was delivered to the exam board unit, based on tracking information provided by the carrier, but was not further delivered to or received by the SWE officer.

**Lost Exam:** An exam which has been delivered to the exam board unit based on tracking information provided by the carrier, was delivered to the SWE Officer, but later was lost or misplaced by the SWE Officer prior to administration or after administration, but prior to shredding.

**Opened Exam:** An exam which has had the plastic seal broken prior to administration.

**Possible Compromised Exam:** Disclosure of exam content to a person(s) that are not authorized access to that information where the disclosure may have provided an opportunity for collusion.

**Compromised Exam:** Disclosure of exam content to a person(s), that were not authorized access to that information, where disclosure of that content resulted in collusion.

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**Initial Report** **Commands shall** report any of the above the circumstances to PPC (ADV) via email to [PPC-DG-CUSTOMERCARE@USCG.MIL](mailto:PPC-DG-CUSTOMERCARE@USCG.MIL). For any questions prior to reporting, call 785-339-3411. This initial report should include as a minimum:

- Reason for report (From the Definitions above)
  - The title of exam(s) involved. (ie. All Exams for Exam Board, or a specific exam “YN1 exam for PO Smith”)
  - A brief summary of the circumstances known
  - POC(s)
-

**Action after  
initial report**

**Undelivered Exam:** FEDEX packages should be received with 2-3 work days after shipping. Priority Mail with Signature Confirmation Receipt should be received within 5 work days after shipping. After the normal delivery period has passed contact PPC (ADV) and request a tracking number (FEDEX) and go to the web site ([www.fedex.com](http://www.fedex.com)) to track the package. The web page will show the current location (city, state) of the package. Initiate a tracer through FEDEX and follow up daily until the package is delivered. Keep PPC (ADV) notified on the progress. PPC (ADV) will provide further directions if the package is declared lost by the delivery company.

**Delivered But Not Received by SWE Officer:** The tracking web page (described in the previous paragraph) will show the name of the person who signed for the package. Conduct a thorough search of the unit to find the lost package and report daily to PPC (ADV) on the progress. Following the initial report, if compromise is suspected, an investigation may be required by PPC (ADV) as described below.

**Lost Exam:** When a SWE Officer has lost an exam that was previously in his/her possession, immediately notify PPC (ADV) following the directions in the “Initial Report” section above. Following the initial report, if compromise is suspected, an investigation may be required by PPC (ADV) as described below.

**Opened exam:** Immediately notify PPC (ADV) following the directions in the “Initial Report” section above. Following the initial report, if compromise is suspected, an investigation may be required by PPC (ADV) as described below.

**Possible Compromised Exam:** Immediately notify PPC (ADV) following the directions in the “Initial Report” section above. Following the initial report, if compromise is suspected, an investigation may be required by PPC (ADV) as described below.

**Compromised SWE:** Following the initial report, if all facts were not readily available and presented in the initial report, a formal investigation is required as described below.

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**Convening an  
Administrative  
Investigation**

As per reference (a), if a compromise is suspected and all facts are not readily available, the commanding officer should convene an investigation in accordance with Administrative Investigations Manual, CIM 5830.1(series). The record of proceedings in the investigation shall be forwarded in accordance with reference (j), Administrative Investigations Manual CIM 5830.1(series), with advance copies submitted to Commander CG PSC (epm-1) and Commanding Officer CG PPC (ADV) in amplification of the report required above.

Upon receipt, PSC (epm-1) and PPC (ADV) will review the details and make a determination of the appropriate action.

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## Substitute Servicewide Exams

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### Requesting Substitute SWE's

Policy and the criteria for a member to qualify for taking a substitute SWE is contained in COMDTINST M1000.2C, Art. 3.B.2 located at: <https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/Pages/main.aspx>. Additional guidance is included in the applicable SWE announcement messages. Please be aware of new changes to substitute policy outlined in the 1 SWE announcement message traffic as well.

Procedures on requesting substitute SWE's are contained in Servicewide Examination Guide located at: <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/ppc/Shared%20Documents/ADV/SWE%20Guide.pdf> and are repeated here for your convenience:

### SUBSTITUTE SWE REQUEST

All requests for substitute exams must come from the members command and meet the policy requirements set forth in article 3.B.2 of reference (a). Send substitute SWE requests by email (with CO or XO on the Cc line) to [PPC-DG-CustomerCare@uscg.mil](mailto:PPC-DG-CustomerCare@uscg.mil) within 7 days after the scheduled SWE date, as shown below.

The date of administration should be the earliest date possible upon members return to normal duty. Administration of substitute exams may not be delayed due to personal leave or convenience since members taking substitute exams shall not be afforded additional study time. All substitute exams must be administered and returned with PPC (ADV) ASAP but no more than 35 days after the normal exam date. Sample text for request:

SUBJ: Request for Substitute SWE for (Rate, Name, EMPLID, USCG(R))  
A. ART 3.B.2, COMDTINST M1000.2B  
B. Servicewide Examination Guide  
1. IAW reference (a), it is requested that a substitute SWE for SNM be forwarded to (Exam Board Unit Name), to be administered on (DATE).  
2. (A detailed description of reason):  
    "Emergency leave due to"...;  
    "Illness or hospitalization due to..."  
    ..."Medical officer recommendation states..."  
    "Operations due to..."  
    "Circumstances beyond the members control due to..."  
3. POC: (rate, name, phone#)

**Note: Requests for substitute SWE's for absence due to surgery will be approved only if the member or family member did not receive "elective" surgery (Lasik Eye, Cosmetic...), causing absence from the normal exam.**

Provide details whether or not the surgery was elective.

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## SWE CHALLENGE QUESTION WORKSHEET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Exam Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
(example...ME2)

Exam Board OPFAC: \_\_\_\_\_ Exam ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Question Number Being Challenged: \_\_\_\_\_ Found On Page: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Question (check one) Rating \_\_\_\_\_ E-PME \_\_\_\_\_

Which Answer Did You Choose? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain the discrepancy, as you see it, in the space below. *(Do not copy or paraphrase the question from this test)*

Unit Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Email: \_\_\_\_\_

# ATTENTION

## IS YOUR SWE MAILING ADDRESS CORRECT?

Please check the unit address on the FEDEX package you received your SWE's in. If this address is incorrect fill out the below form and return it to PPC (ADV) with your SWE answer sheets so we can update our FEDEX address database.

FEDEX also needs your phone number.

THANK YOU

UNIT OPFAC: \_\_\_\_\_

UNIT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

SWE OFFICER/ESO PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

# SWE Officer Check Off Sheet

This optional form may be used by the SWE Officer as a tool to track progress of his/her duties during a SWE cycle. Details for these steps are contained in the handbook.

## One Month Prior to SWE

### Done   Task

- \_\_\_\_\_ Receive and read the SWE Announcement Message and pass to crew
- \_\_\_\_\_ Review COMDTINST M1000.2, Chapter 3.B. and the SWE Officer Handbook, then make preliminary SWE arrangements for the exam room
- \_\_\_\_\_ Notify/assign monitors who will assist to maintain a 1/25 ratio in the exam room
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure exam materials listed on page 10 of this handbook are on hand
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure a 3-combo safe with SWE Officer only access is available
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plan future seating arrangement in exam room to separate those in the same rate

## After Receipt of SWEs

### Done   Task

- \_\_\_\_\_ Read/follow colored flyer included in SWE package
- \_\_\_\_\_ Review SWE package contents to ensure all exams have not been opened
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure an exam booklet was received for each member listed on the shipping list
- \_\_\_\_\_ Provide to all members in writing (Plan of Week; Bulletin Board...) a list of names of all members that an exam was received for and date and time of the upcoming exam (do not post SSN's)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Notify PPC via email of missing exams or incorrect exams booklets
- \_\_\_\_\_ Count blank answer sheets to ensure you received enough or request more from PPC
- \_\_\_\_\_ Store exams in a 3-combo safe that only SWE Officer(s) have access to
- \_\_\_\_\_ Forward via FEDEX, any exams for members who will be TDY or PCS to another unit on exam day

## Just Prior and During Exams

### Done   Task

- \_\_\_\_\_ Ready the exam room
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check members ID cards as they enter the exam room
- \_\_\_\_\_ Seat Candidates in predesignated areas (separate members taking the same exam)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Provide exam materials to candidates
- \_\_\_\_\_ Read Verbatim Instructions to candidates and begin exam
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take note of any missing booklets or booklets with errors. Follow steps in section titled "Discrepancies in Exams"
- \_\_\_\_\_ Collect all exams materials from each candidate
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check answer sheet answers for obvious problems – top ID blocks not completed correctly;  
ovals colored too lightly; eraser smudges... and have the candidate correct them before departing the exam room

## After the Exam

### Done   Task

- \_\_\_\_\_ Follow the guidelines for "Action After Examination" in this publication