

APPENDIX D – Testing Standard 1
NASBLA TESTING STANDARDS FOR EXAM QUESTIONS
NASBLA Standard 9.2.3

TESTING STANDARD 1

Each examination should be compiled using professional testing procedures. These would include:

- A. Each question in the examination will be a grammatically correct, four-option, multiple-choice question composed of a question (premise); a key (correct alternative); and three distractors (incorrect alternatives).
- B. Each question must be a complete sentence.
- C. A question that states an opinion of an author or source, rather than reflecting a fact or principle, should use the statement, “According to. . . .”
- D. The alternatives must be in a logical order if one exists. Alternatives beginning with the same words should follow each other.
- E. Each alternative answer must be a grammatical and logical reply to the question asked.
- F. Avoid overlapping alternatives.
- G. Alternatives must not utilize distractors such as ‘all of the above’, ‘none of the above’, ‘a and b’, or ‘(1) or (2).’
- H. When possible, avoid developing questions using negative words, i.e.: no, not, never. Also, NEVER use double negatives.
- I. Avoid repeating information in the alternatives that can be included in the question.
- J. Alternatives should not be distinguishable from the correct alternative based on sentence length.
- K. Do not use abbreviations *lbs.*, *in.*, *ft.*, etc. - except in drawings. The goal is to measure knowledge of the topic, not the ability to discern abbreviations.
- L. In questions involving time, all times should be specified as either a.m. or p.m. (lower case with periods).
- M. Each test question must be referenced with a NASBLA Standard. See Appendix E.
- N. The examination should include clearly written directions to the candidates on how to respond to the questions.
- O. The correct alternatives for the exam questions should be equally distributed (or as nearly so as possible) among each of the alternatives, i.e. 25% of the answers should be alternative a, 25% should be alternative b, 25% should be alternative c, and 25% should be alternative d.
- P. There should be no more than three questions in a row with the same key (correct alternative).
- Q. All questions submitted to NASBLA must be written in a NASBLA-approved format.

Examples of Professional Testing Procedures

Example 1

Each question in the examination will be a grammatically correct four-option multiple-choice statement composed of a question (premise); a key (correct alternative); and three distractors (incorrect alternatives).

EXAMPLE:

Premise – States the question or problem	Where are boat registration numbers displayed?
Alternatives (Options)	
Distractors – Incorrect alternatives	a. transom. b. mast. c. stern.
Key – Correct alternative	d. bow.

Example 2

Each question must be a complete sentence.

Incorrect Example: The leading cause of boating fatalities is _____?

Correct Example: What is the leading cause of boating fatalities?

Example 3

A question that states an opinion of an author or source, rather than reflecting a fact or principle, should use the statement, “According to . . .”

According to the *United States Coast Guard Boating Statistics*, what is the leading cause of recreational boating fatalities?

Example 4

The alternatives should be in a logical order if one exists. Alternatives beginning with the same words should follow each other.

Which is classified as a throwable type of USCG-approved PFD?

- a. Type I
- b. Type II
- c. Type III
- d. Type IV

Example 5

Each alternative answer should be a grammatical and logical reply to the question asked.

What is the preferred type of dock line?

- a. Nylon
 - b. Dacron
 - c. Braided core
 - d. Polyurethane
-

Example 6

Avoid overlapping alternatives

What type of boat is required to carry one USCG approved Type I, II, III, or V wearable PFD for each person onboard and one Type IV throwable?

- a. boats **16 feet and under in length.**
 - b. boats **16 feet and over in length.** **NO!**
 - c. canoes, kayaks and rowboats.
 - d. sailboats and motorboats.
-

Example 7

Alternatives should ***NOT*** utilize distractors such as ‘all of the above’, ‘none of the above’, ‘a and b’, or ‘(1) or (2).’

What is the best type of PFD(s) for a toddler?

- a. Type I only
 - b. Type I and Type II only **NO!**
 - c. Type III and Type IV only
 - d. **none of the above**
-

Example 8

When possible, avoid developing questions using negative words, i.e.: no, not, never. Also, NEVER use double negatives.

What size of recreational boat is ***NOT*** required by Coast Guard regulations to carry a throwable personal flotation device?

- a. 16 feet to less than 26 feet.
 - b. 26 feet to less than 40 feet. **NO!**
 - c. less than 16 feet.
 - d. 40 feet and over.
-

Example 9

Avoid repeating information in the alternatives that can be included in the question.

What type of fire extinguisher is for use on a class “A” fire?

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|---------------------|
| a. a chemical fire . | | a. chemical. |
| b. an electrical fire . | | b. electrical. |
| c. a wood or plastic fire . | Instead: | c. wood or plastic. |
| d. a gasoline fire . | | d. gasoline. |
-

Example 10

Alternatives should NOT be distinguishable from the correct alternative based on sentence length.

Which of the following statements are true about the flare type visual distress signals?

- | | |
|--|------------|
| a. must be hand-held. | |
| b. are required on all boats. | NO! |
| c. do not expire. | |
| d. are required on boats operating on Great Lakes and coastal waters. | |
-

Example 11

Do NOT use abbreviations such as *lbs.*, *in.*, *ft.*, etc. - except in drawings. The goal is to measure knowledge of the topic, not the ability to discern abbreviations.

What is the most important consideration when selecting personal flotation devices for a 19-ft. family-use runabout? **NO!**

- a. uniformity.
 - b. color.
 - c. price.
 - d. size.
-

Example 12

In questions involving time, all times should be specified as either a.m. or p.m. (lower case with periods).

When are recreational boats required to display navigational lights?

- a. between sunset and sunrise.
- b. between 6 **p.m.** and 6 **a.m.**
- c. only when other boats are present.
- d. only when there is no bright moon.

Example 13

Each test question must be referenced with a NASBLA Standard.

See Appendix E and Appendix G

Example 14

The examination should include clearly written directions to the candidates on how to respond to the questions.

Example 15

The correct alternatives for the exam questions should be equally distributed (or as nearly so as possible) among each of the alternatives, i.e. 25% of the answers should be alternative a, 25% should be alternative b, 25% should be alternative c, and 25% should be alternative d.

Example 16

There should be no more than three questions in a row with the same key (correct alternative).
