

CEVNI - Code Européen des Voies de la Navigation Intérieure

The news page of this issue mentions that the RYA has implemented an online version of the CEVNI test. For anyone new to the inland waterways of Europe, CEVNI is the 'Rules of the Road' on the rivers and canals Europe, excluding the UK. You can find a copy on line of the UNECE regulations in English or French, which comprises 200 A4 pages, so there is a lot to learn compared with the maritime Collision Regulations which take only 20 pages. To be fair, the CEVNI document does contain excellent pictures of all the buoyage, signs and symbols, like this poor mariner who appears to be in some trouble.....



CEVNI Distress Signals

You will need an ICC (International Certificate of Competence) with a CEVNI endorsement to take your boat on most inland waterways in mainland Europe. The online test makes the CEVNI portion much more accessible, with no travel, and probably at lower cost. When you register on RYAInteractive.org, you can do unlimited practice tests. When confident of passing, you select an RYA Training Centre, pay a fee and obtain a PIN number for the real test. The test is split into two sections:

Part 1: Signs and buoyage.

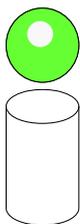
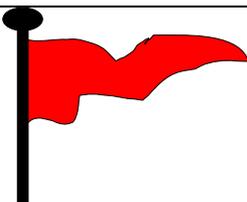
Part 2: Sound signals, lights and shapes.

The pass mark for each section is 11 correct from 15 multiple choice questions.

It may appear that the online version allows you to look up the answers, but the time limits are short enough that you really need to know the subject. On successful completion you can download a pass certificate.

The system works and has been well tested with many browsers and PCs; including a bug I found in an early version where answer (a) was always correct for every question. Occasionally a combination of user PC security settings and software will cause a problem, but the RYA has always found an answer. The site provides a compatibility check of the software you need, and reminds you to turn off pop up blockers. If you do not want to bother with the technology, the written test is still available.

Why do the regulations need to be so long and complex? Mainly because they are aimed at distinguishing the huge volumes of commercial vessels, many approaching ocean going size on the Rhine and other major waterways.. The speed of the currents, and the variations in depth, make it essential to give them priority. They can elect to change channels from the right to left when showing the appropriate signals, and you have to cross channel to allow them. A 'normal' vessel for CEVNI purposes is over 20 metres long, and they have priority. Hazardous cargoes have even more priority, and so do some passenger vessels.

		
<p>Power ferry with priority - day</p>	<p>Vessel with priority of passage</p>	<p>Small passenger vessel</p>

Many of the information signs are self explanatory, but channel markers and crossovers need careful learning. Sound signals have some significant variations from the IRPCS. You may find some signs repetitive, possibly because many countries need to make an input, and there are exceptions in some countries, eg:

	
<i>Cross channel to port</i>	<i>Move to the side of the channel on your port side</i>

And my favourite for bridges:

	
<i>Recommended channel 2 way traffic</i>	<i>Recommended channel 1 way traffic in your favour</i>

If you want to study the subject further, the best book is 'RYA - European Waterways Regulations: The CEVNI Rules Explained' by Tam Murrell.