

**UNITED STATES POWER SQUADRONS®**  
**Educational Department**

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**EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT NOTICE No. 88**

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**TO:** ALL SQUADRON EDUCATIONAL OFFICERS

**COPY:** Squadron Commanders  
District Commanders  
District Educational Officers  
National Educational Department Staff  
Members of the Operating Committee

**SUBJECT: USE OF COMPUTERS FOR EXAMINATIONS**

**PURPOSE: TO SPECIFY LIMITS ON THE USE OF COMPUTERS ON EXAMINATIONS**

**BACKGROUND:**

In recent years computer programs have been developed which can solve most of the navigation problems in our courses, and the use of computers on board boats is becoming commonplace. Our courses are intended to teach the student the basics of safe navigation and include methods to stay safe if electronics fail. While our courses increasingly provide information on the use of electronics and computers for navigation, their completion is based on the student acquiring basic knowledge on the use of a basic handheld calculator. The increased popularity of computers has led to the question of their use on both closed and open book examinations.

The entire contents of our courses can be stored without taxing the memory of today's home computers. The intent of a closed book examination is to examine the student on what he has learned in the course. Questions are based on what should reasonably be recalled. In some cases, examinations provide the student with formulas or other information that is difficult to remember. If computers were used for closed book examinations it would be tantamount to the use of notes and course material during the exam, i.e. it would be an open book examination. This is contrary to the intent of a closed book examination.

The use of computers to prepare the required examination worksheets is inconsistent with this intent, and raises the question of whether or not they represent the student's work during the specified time period. Further, the printouts may contain superfluous information that complicates and delays checking of the examination.

**LIMITATIONS:**

Electronic computers may not be used in lieu of a calculator or otherwise during closed book examinations. The examination administrator should not allow computers in the exam area while closed book examinations are being administered.

Worksheets and plots submitted with open book examinations for grading shall be prepared by hand by the student. Computer generated worksheets and plots will not be accepted. Examinations that are submitted with computer generated worksheets or plots will be returned to the squadron without grading. Copies of forms and worksheets contained in the course materials, when completed by hand, continue to be acceptable.

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*Please note the contents of this EDN and advise all concerned*