

International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea

ART 03/2000

- < 1972 IRPCS Rules apply to everyone at sea.
- < Supplemented by Local regulations.
- < Rules do not prevent collisions - people in charge of vessels do.

Rules establish a common framework within which vessels can operate in a safe manner.

Summary

Manoeuvres - In any condition of visibility.

Rule 5: Look-out.

Must maintain a proper look-out at all times.

- < Sight.
- < Sound.
- < Other appropriate means (eg radar).

Rule 7: Risk of Collision.

Use all available means appropriate at the time to determine if a collision risk exists. If in doubt, assume the risk exists.

- < Observe relative velocities.
- < Observe relative bearings.
- < Take compass bearings.

Rule 8: Action to avoid collision.

Any action taken to avoid a collision shall be positive, made in good time and with regard to good seamanship practices.

- < Alter course.
- < Alter speed.
- C Act well before a close-quarters situation can develop.
- C Make your intentions absolutely clear.
- C Avoid crossing ahead of the vessel to which you're giving way to.
- C Be aware of all other vessels - not just the one you're currently trying to avoid.
- C Take extra care in confined waters.

Rule 9: Narrow Channels.

- < Keep to the right (starboard).
- < Do not impede other vessels of restricted manoeuvrability.
- < Take extra care when crossing the channel - cross at 90E.
- < Avoid anchoring in channel.
- C Definition of a 'channel' is relative.

Manoeuvres - In sight of other vessels.

Rule 13: Overtaking.

- < Overtaking vessel should keep out of the way of the vessel being overtaken.
- < Vessel being overtaken should not hamper the overtaking vessel (eg by changing course).

Rule 14: Head-on situation.

When two vessels are meeting on reciprocal courses, both should alter course to **starboard** so as to pass **port** side to **port** side.

- < Make course change obvious.
- < Be prepared to slow down or reverse.

Rule 15: Crossing.

When two powered vessels are crossing, the vessel with the other on her **starboard** side shall keep clear; give-way vessel should alter course to **starboard** and pass astern of the other vessel.

Rule 16: Action by give-way vessel.

If you are required to give way, take early and obvious action so as to keep well clear.

Rule 17: Action by stand-on vessel.

- < Maintain course and speed.
- < Be prepared to change course, slow down or reverse - just in case the other vessel hasn't seen you or doesn't know the rules.

Rule 18: Responsibilities between vessels.

Subject to requirements of rules 9 and 13, give way to or keep clear of:

- C Vessels not under command.
- C Vessel of restricted manoeuvrability.
- C Vessel engaged in fishing.
- C Sailing vessel.

Lights.

Rule 23: Power-driven vessels underway.

50 - 12 m: White forward masthead light + **Port** and **Starboard** sidelights + White stern light.

12 - 7 m: As above, *or* All-round White light + **Port** and **Starboard** sidelights.

- < A vessel below 7 m and speed under 7 knots should show an all-round White light, and sidelights if possible.

Sounds.

Rule 34: Manoeuvring and warning signals.

For vessels in sight of one another:

- M = Turning to **starboard**.
- MM = Turning to **port**.
- MMM = Engines running astern.
- MMMMM+ = Alert: 'Wake Up'.

(M = Short blast on horn)

